

# For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

Ex LIBRIS  
UNIVERSITATIS  
ALBERTAENSIS













THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

"The Critical Reception of Georg Kaiser's Dramas: 1915-45"

by

Peter K. Tyson



A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

GERMAN LITERATURE

DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1983





## Table of Contents

### VOLUME II - COMMENTARY

A. Introduction.....	1
B. The Major Expressionist Dramas: 1915-33. Georg Kaiser's Breakthrough as an Expressionist.....	16
C. The Discovery of Kaiser's Early Dramas after his Breakthrough as an Expressionist: 1917-21.....	102
D. The Post-Expressionist Period: 1922-33.....	204
E. Premieres in Exile: 1933-45.....	353
F. Conclusion.....	372
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	378
APPENDIX.....	435



## I. COMMENTARY

### A. Introduction

The Eichmann trial (1960) and the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials (1962-64), the *Spiegel*-affair (1962), the Grand Coalition and the rise of the APO, the shootings of Benno Ohnesorg and Rudi Dutschke and the Vietnam war all helped to make the 1960's, after the stability of the 1950's, a period of social turmoil in which a rapid politicisation of students, writers and intellectuals took place. With this politicisation, "Germanistik" entered a period of crisis as traditional literary criteria were questioned. The purist study of literature "per se" ("Werkimmanenz") no longer seemed completely valid as social, political, psychological and historical factors asserted themselves.' For Beate Pinkerneil, a major turning point in the development of the -----

'W. Solms describes the situation at one university before the crisis: "Vor genau zehn Jahren, im Wintersemester 1967/68, bestand die Literaturwissenschaft an vielen Universitäten, in Marburg wie in München, ausschliesslich in der Beschäftigung mit deutscher Dichtung. Die einzelnen Lehrveranstaltungen repräsentieren eine kanonische Reihe von Meisterwerken vom Hildebrandslied bis zu Hofmannsthal. Im Marburger Vorlesungsverzeichnis findet sich eine einzige Ausnahme: das Proseminar 'Einführung in die Methode der Interpretation'. Damals herrschte also eine einzige Methode vor, in die man zu Beginn seines Studiums eingeführt wurde und die einem im weiteren Verlauf so selbstverständlich war, dass man sie nicht mehr als bestimmte Methode reflektierte: die *immanente Interpretation*" ("Die Methodologisierung der Literaturwissenschaft," in *Literaturwissenschaft heute*, ed. F. Nemec and W. Solms [Munich: Fink, 1979], p. 11).





methodology of literary study was "die antiautoritäre Studentenbewegung in der zweiten Hälfte der 60er Jahre":

Mit ihr wurden ästhetische und literaturtheoretische Probleme als untrennbar von politisch-gesellschaftlichen Konstellationen, Standpunkten und Folgen diskutiert, die fachwissenschaftlichen Grenzen der Literaturwissenschaft gesprengt zugunsten einer Öffnung auf Erkenntnisinteressen, -ziele und -resultate speziell der Gesellschaftswissenschaft.<sup>2</sup>

With the loss of the old methodological paradigm and in a frenzy of theoretical activity, a new paradigm began to take shape. The growing awareness of the relative validity of different methodological approaches was the breakthrough needed in the search for a new, modern paradigm:

So führte die Methodendiskussion zwangsläufig zum Ergebnis, dass sich nicht eine bestimmte Methode wie in der vergangenen Literaturwissenschaft, sondern das Neben-, Mit- und Ineinander vieler Methoden, der *Methodenpluralismus* als Paradigma durchsetzte.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the fragmentation of methodology after the rejection of "Werkimmanenz" in the late 1960's can be seen as overcoming the crisis in "Germanistik".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Beate Pinkerneil, "Literaturwissenschaft seit 1967," in *Methodische Praxis der Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. D. Kimpel and B. Pinkerneil (Kronberg/Ts.: Scriptor, 1975), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Solms, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup>Solms writes: "Durch diesen Paradigmawechsel scheint die Krise der Literaturwissenschaft gelöst. Das Gegeneinander der methodischen Richtungen hat sich im Laufe der Diskussion in ein friedliches Nebeneinander gewandelt. Die heutige Literaturwissenschaft versteht sich als ein Rahmen, der sämtliche Positionen, ob fortschrittlicher oder herkömmlicher Provenienz, umfasst. Sie hat sich durch den Pluralismus der Methoden ein Mittel geschaffen, ihren Gegenstand allen Anforderungen der pluralen Gesellschaft dienstbar zu machen. Das Paradigma des Methodenpluralismus bedeutet aber nicht nur, dass alle Methoden gültig sind, sondern ebenso, dass keine Methode akzeptiert wird, die an ihrem Anspruch, Sinn und Zusammenhang des Ganzen zu erfassen, festhält, statt sich selbst als einseitigen Ansatz zu präsentieren und die anderen als notwendige Ergänzung zu



Reception theory, therefore, is just one partially valid methodological approach amongst many others.<sup>5</sup> Its leading theoreticians are H. R. Jauss, Wolfgang Iser and the East German collective around Manfred Naumann.

Unfortunately, reception theory is only at an early stage of development. Many basic problems remain unresolved and there is a lack of consensus on important issues, despite the active debate provoked by the writings of Jauss, Iser and the East Germans. Peter Uwe Hohendahl writes:

Die rezente methodologische Diskussion über Stellung und Wert von Rezeptionsästhetik und -geschichte hat das begriffliche Instrumentarium und damit auch die Einsicht in die Sachzusammenhänge beträchtlich erweitert, jedoch nicht zu einer einheitlichen Theorie geführt. Die Entwicklung von theoretischen Modellen hat vielmehr die Divergenzen nur noch klarer hervortreten lassen.<sup>6</sup>

These divergencies have increased the need for an integrated theory. Hohendahl continues:

Vorerst ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass die Rede von *einer* Disziplin, genau besehen, eine Vereinfachung darstellt. Hinter dem Namen 'Rezeptionsforschung' verbergen sich eine Anzahl von Forschungsgebieten mit je eigenen Methoden und Erkenntnisinteressen. Überschneidungen sind allenthalben festzustellen, eine theoretische Integration ist bis heute nicht erreicht. Und zwar aus zwei Gründen: einmal ist der Objektbereich der Leserforschung mittlerweile schier unübersehbar geworden, zum anderen sind die methodologischen Prämissen so unterschiedlich, dass eine addierende Zusammenfassung der Forschungsergebnisse sich von vornherein verbietet. Es bedürfte einer ausführlichen analytischen Untersuchung, um zu klären, auf welcher Ebene der

-----  
<sup>4</sup>(cont'd)begrüssen" (p. 28).

<sup>5</sup>See H. R. Jauss, "Racines und Goethes Iphigenie. Mit einem Nachwort über die Partialität der rezeptionsästhetischen Methode," in *Rezeptionsästhetik*, ed. R. Warning (Munich: Fink, 1975), pp. 353-400.

<sup>6</sup>P. U. Hohendahl, "Vorwort" to *Sozialgeschichte und Wirkungsästhetik* (Frankfurt/M.: Athenäum, 1974), p. 7.





linguistische und der sozialgeschichtliche Ansatz beziehungsweise der phänomenologische und der materialistische sich sinnvoll in Beziehung setzen lassen.<sup>7</sup>

These divergent, at times contradictory, trends within the same area of research can best be understood "als Ansätze und Lösungsvorschläge, die den vertrauten Begriff von Literatur zu transzendieren versuchen."<sup>8</sup> There is even confusion with regard to basic terminology. Hohendahl criticises "eine terminologische Verwirrung, die dringend der Klärung bedarf";<sup>9</sup> Karlheinz Barck complains about Western reception study, remarking "schwankend und noch ungenau sind auch die verwendeten Begriffe"<sup>10</sup> and Pinkerneil considers this indiscriminate use of terminology an indication of a reception theory which is still only at an early stage in its development:

Der vor allem in westdeutschen rezeptionstheoretischen Erörterungen schwankende Gebrauch der Termini Rezeption und Wirkung, Rezeptionsgeschichte und Wirkungsgeschichte, Rezeptionsästhetik und Wirkungsästhetik ist symptomatisch für hier noch im Gärungsprozess befindliche Überlegungen.<sup>11</sup>

For Hohendahl, the reception debate has yet to clarify basic premises: "Offenkundig ist die Grundsatzdebatte der Rezeptionstheorie nicht abgeschlossen."<sup>12</sup>

-----  
<sup>7</sup>Hohendahl, "Einleitung" to *Sozialgeschichte und Wirkungsästhetik*, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>Hohendahl, "Einleitung," p. 16.

<sup>9</sup>Hohendahl, "Vorwort," p. 7.

<sup>10</sup>Karlheinz Barck, "Zur Kritik des Rezeptionsproblems in bürgerlichen Literaturauffassungen," in *Gesellschaft – Literatur – Lesen*, ed. M. Naumann (Berlin: Aufbau, 1975<sup>2</sup>), p. 133.

<sup>11</sup>Pinkerneil, pp. 55–56.

<sup>12</sup>P. U. Hohendahl, "Einleitung" to *LiLi: Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik*, 4 (1974), No. 15, 11.



Indeed, the East German theorist Manfred Naumann is only too aware of the problems involved in trying to develop a reception theory. He sees the first difficulty "in der Komplexität der Thematik und in der Unbestimmtheit vieler Begriffe".<sup>13</sup> He concedes that *Gesellschaft - Literatur - Lesen* cannot offer lasting solutions to many problems<sup>14</sup> and he concludes that the many variable factors, which affect the reception of a work, make it practically impossible to formulate general rules, that

das Zusammentreffen zwischen einem Leser und einem Werk in seinem Vorher, in seinem Verlauf und in seinem Nachher so viele Varianten aufweist, dass von hier aus verallgemeinernde Schlüsse nur schwer möglich sind. Die individuelle Werkrezeption ist zugleich Endpunkt und Ausgangspunkt einer Kette von gesellschaftlich-geschichtlichen, biographisch-individuellen und speziell literaturgeschichtlichen Ereignissen und Prozessen, von Vermittlungen und Wechselwirkungen sozialer, psychologischer und ästhetischer Natur, so dass jeder Versuch, von hier aus zu allgemeinen Gesetzmässigkeiten vorzustossen, unüberwindliche Schwierigkeiten mit sich bringt.<sup>15</sup>

However, the problems of reception research are not just theoretical but also practical. Gunter Grimm raises serious doubts as to the possibility of a practical application of Jauss's theories:

Gegen die Praktikabilität können zahlreiche Einwände vorgebracht werden. Der Erwartungshorizont lässt sich nicht objektivieren; *der* Leser ist nie fassbar: Wirkung von Literatur auf die Gesellschaft lässt sich nur an Einzelrezipienten nachweisen, niemals an

---

<sup>13</sup>M. Naumann, "Einleitung" to *Gesellschaft - Literatur - Lesen*, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup>"Viele unserer Lösungswege und Lösungsvorschläge tragen experimentellen Charakter" (Naumann, "Einleitung," p. 12).

<sup>15</sup>M. Naumann, "Einführung in die theoretischen und methodischen Hauptprobleme," in *Gesellschaft - Literatur - Lesen*, p. 97.





einer allgemeinen oder gar idealtypischen Konstruktion.<sup>16</sup>

He is unconvinced by Jauss's attempt to put his theory into practice in his "Iphigenie" essay:

Wie unzulänglich die praktische Ausführung der theoretischen Postulate sein muss, belegt Jauss' eigene Untersuchung über Goethes *Iphigenie*; hier werden ziemlich unbefragt Zeugnisse zur Wirkung des Dramas aus einem Dokumentenbändchen herangezogen. Diese Textausschnitte gewähren zwar einen interessanten Einblick in die Wirkungsgeschichte der *Iphigenie*, können aber nicht den Anspruch auf Repräsentativität erheben; diese konstruiert erst Jauss aus ihnen (und nur aus ihnen): zur Konstruktion eines Erwartungshorizontes bedarf es indes wesentlich umfangreicherer Recherchen.<sup>17</sup>

So far, no one has accomplished the difficult task of writing a literary history based on reception theory.<sup>18</sup> For Grimm, Jauss's theory is not very practical for this purpose:

Wie aber sollte praktisch Literaturgeschichte als Rezeptionsgeschichte geschrieben werden? Jauss selbst praktiziert sein Verfahren nur an einzelnen literarischen Phänomenen. Schwierigkeiten für die Darstellung aus der Rezeptionsperspektive ergäben sich gegenüber der Produktionsperspektive dadurch, dass bei ihr für fast jedes Werk ein besonderer Erwartungshorizont konstruiert werden müsste, der, wenn man die idealtypische Konstruktion aufgibt zugunsten seiner sozialen Verankerung, in eine Vielzahl von Erwartungshorizonten aufgespalten werden müsste, je nachdem, welches Publikum anvisiert werden soll. [...] Für die Abfassung einer gesamten Literaturgeschichte ist die rezeptionshistorische Methode unpraktikabel, da sie einen Aufwand erforderte, den das Ergebnis nicht rechtfertigen würde.<sup>19</sup>

-----  
<sup>16</sup>Gunter Grimm, "Einführung in die Rezeptionsforschung," *Literatur und Leser* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975), p. 50.

<sup>17</sup>Grimm, pp. 50-51.

<sup>18</sup>"Eine auf rezeptionshistorischer Basis verfasste Literaturgeschichte ist noch nicht geschrieben; ihrer Realisation dürften sich auch allzu viele Hemmnisse in den Weg stellen" (Grimm, p. 40).

<sup>19</sup>Grimm, p. 51.



Likewise, with regard to East German reception theory, Pinkerneil complains of a lack of practical examples which illustrate this theory:

zwar wird die 'Praktikabilität' interpretationstheoretischer Ansätze abstrakt postuliert, doch lässt die interpretatorische Praxis eine Rückkoppelung an jene wenig erkennen. Als uneingelöst erscheint gerade angesichts der beiden in *Gesellschaft, Literatur, Lesen* durchgeführten Textanalysen die konkrete Verarbeitung rezeptionstheoretischer Erkenntnisse, ihre Operationalisierung im Verkehr mit literarischen Werken.<sup>20</sup>

Because reception theory is still at an experimental stage, because of the lack of consensus on terminology and important principles, because of the wide divergencies within the movement and because of the lack of convincing practical examples, it is difficult to use its methods and theories as a basis for this study of Georg Kaiser. The reception debate has taken place on too rarefied, too abstract and theoretical a level. Indeed, the lack of practical examples which adapt the theories convincingly would seem to imply deficiencies in the theory. Jauss's aims are totally different from those of this project – we are not concerned with writing a literary history on reception principles, with establishing the reader's "Erwartungshorizont", with "aesthetic distance" and with the "gesellschaftsbildenden Funktion der Literatur". Iser's interest in reading processes and text structures is not particularly relevant to a study which will be concerned with the reception of dramatic productions. Whereas Jauss,

---

<sup>20</sup>Pinkerneil, p. 60.





Iser and Naumann are all concerned with the reception of a written text, this project, in contrast, will deal with the reception of stage performances. In fact, Naumann realises that this is beyond the scope of East German theory:

Und schon gar nicht geht es uns um die dramatische oder filmische Realisierung von Literatur [...]. Wir konzentrieren uns auf diejenige Form der Rezeption, in der die Werke in Gestalt von Schrifttexten und die Rezipienten in Gestalt von Lesern einander begegnen, auf das *Lesen*, die *Lektüre*.<sup>21</sup>

The reader and the reading process have, however, little relevance for this study. Moreover, while Jauss, Iser and Naumann tend to deal with a general "Leser", we are concerned with a very specific "Rezipient", the theatre critic and his reception of drama on the stage.

In the light of the over-abstract theorising of the reception debate, it is difficult not to sympathise with Wolfgang Wittkowski's pragmatic approach to reception theory.<sup>22</sup> Taking a commonsense approach, he is sceptical of theories which offer no practical assistance.<sup>23</sup> For Wittkowski, Jauss's theorising has had a detrimental effect on his practical work, as is revealed by his "Iphigenie"

-----  
<sup>21</sup>Naumann, "Einleitung," p. 8.

<sup>22</sup>Wittkowski complains: "Mein Unbehagen gilt also [...] nicht der Rezeptionsarbeit, sondern der Theorie, genauer: dem Theoretisieren, wie es betrieben wird und wie es sich auswirkt auf Theorie und vor allem Praxis" ("Unbehagen eines Praktikers an der Theorie. Zur Rezeptionsästhetik von Hans Robert Jauss," *Colloquia Germanica*, 12, 1979, 1).

<sup>23</sup>"Der Praktiker wird Anregungen aller Art dankbar entgegennehmen; doch eine Theorie, die ihm nicht hilft, den Gegenstand möglichst zuverlässig zu erfassen, möglichst objektiv, sachgemäss [...]: eine Theorie, die ihn in diesem für seine Arbeit grundlegenden Punkt nicht unterstützt oder gar behindert, wird er wissenschaftlich unglaubwürdig finden und mit grösstem Misstrauen betrachten" (Wittkowski, p. 3).



essay:

das Theoretisieren, der höchste Ausdruck der heute so viel bemühten Reflexion, gewährt offenbar ein trügerisches Bewusstsein methodischer Geborgenheit und führt, verführt zu einem so nachlässigen Vorgehen, wie es der nur minimal geschulte Leser sich natürlich-naiverweise nicht erlaubte, weil er sich seiner Schwierigkeiten meist bewusst bleibt.<sup>2 4</sup>

Jauss's attempt to illustrate his theory in practice reveals only the limitations of his theory:

Jauss liest Goethe und sogar den Rezeptionstext Hegels falsch, weil er das Lesen auf eine so nachlässige Weise betreibt, wie sie nur von seiner theoretischen Herabsetzung dieser Aufgabe her möglich und erklärbar wird. Zudem offenbart sein praktisches Exempel die Widersprüche und die Verwirrung seiner Theorie.<sup>2 5</sup>

We share Wittkowski's scepticism towards theories which seem to have little practical application. Indeed, this study is not intended as an abstract, abstruse treatise on reception theory or methodology but as a practical contribution to Kaiser research. Furthermore, according to Robert C. Holub (writing in 1982), reception theory has been on the wane in recent years:

Nor am I [...] going to plead for American criticism to consider contemporary German theory as an alternative to the current vogues. Reception theory [...] has far too many weak underpinnings and unresolved issues for a wholesale appropriation. In fact, if I am reading the situation in Germany correctly, the attempts to prop up reception theory on firmer ground and to resolve contradictions have dwindled in recent years. Iser has not published a book since *Der Akt des Lesens* (1976); the promised second volume of Jauss' *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik* (1977) has still not appeared; and recent years have witnessed a glut of empirically oriented reception theory, whose quality ranges from mediocre to tedious to naive, flooding

---

<sup>2 4</sup>Wittkowski, p. 21.

<sup>2 5</sup>Wittkowski, pp. 23-24.





the market.<sup>26</sup>

Apart from some reviews of Kaiser productions in Ernst Schürer's *Georg Kaiser: Von morgens bis mitternachts. Erläuterungen und Dokumente* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975), G. Rühle's *Theater für die Republik 1917-33* (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1967) and in the collections of reviews by Alfred Kerr, Herbert Ihering, etc., most reviews of those plays by Georg Kaiser which were performed from 1915-45 have not been reprinted. My study is intended, in part, to fill this gap in Kaiser research with an edited documentation of reviews from 1915-45. In addition, the documentation is complemented by a commentary which also includes a bibliography of all the reviews in the GKC for the period 1915-45 and an appendix listing the premieres and Berlin productions of Kaiser's plays.<sup>27</sup>

The aim of the documentation is to recreate an important period of theatre history. 585 reviews (and supporting documents) are reprinted, covering the productions of 44 of Kaiser's dramas. These reviews, of which only about 7% have been reprinted since 1945, have been collected from the "Georg Kaiser Collection" (University of Alberta) and from various archives in

-----  
<sup>26</sup>Robert C. Holub, "The American Reception of Reception Theory," *German Quarterly*, 55 (1982), 92-93.

<sup>27</sup>D. Goltschnigg offers a similar study in two volumes: *Materialien zur Rezeptions- und Wirkungsgeschichte Georg Büchners* (Kronberg/Ts.: Scriptor, 1974) and *Rezeptions- und Wirkungsgeschichte Georg Büchners* (Kronberg/Ts.: Scriptor, 1975). He provides reprinted historical material in the first volume and an analysis of this material in the second volume.



Switzerland, Austria and Germany. The format of the documentation is similar to the documentations by Rühle, Glauert and Wyss.<sup>28</sup>

In selecting the reviews, I have concentrated on the premieres and the major provincial and Berlin productions. I have tried to present as wide a panorama of contemporary opinions towards Kaiser's dramas as possible – both with regard to political as well as literary views. Thus, it has been possible to contrast the views of the rightwing *Völkischer Beobachter* and those of leftwing workers' newspapers, of Alfred Kerr and Herbert Ihering, of traditionalist and avantgarde critics. When choosing from several reviews of the same production, I have selected those reviews which contain useful information – whether of a theatrical (e.g. information on the staging, style of acting, etc.), historical (e.g. the play's social relevance in its historical context) or critical (e.g. traditionalist interpretations of Expressionist dramas) nature.

In editing a review, I have generally omitted those sections which merely retell the plot of a play in a non-evaluative manner. Apart from the spelling (names, theatres, titles of plays) which has been standardised, the text of a review has been reproduced as accurately as possible. However, the poor condition of some reviews meant that they could not be reprinted in their entirety. At

-----  
<sup>28</sup> Carl Zuckmayer – *Das Bühnenwerk im Spiegel der Kritik*, ed. Barbara Glauert (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1977) and *Brecht in der Kritik*, ed. M. Wyss (Munich: Kindler, 1977).





times, we have reviews in the GKC which lack all the relevant bibliographical information – the identity of the reviewer, the date or source of the review may be missing. These have been included in the documentation section if they contain new information which is not available from the other reviews in my possession.<sup>29</sup> Occasionally, I quote from a review in the commentary either in the main text to emphasize a point or as a footnote in order to present information from a review which is not included in the documentation section because it is not worth reprinting in its entirety. All the details regarding a production or a review are as complete as the material allows.

The commentary highlights the major points discussed by Kaiser's contemporaries. It is intended as a critical introduction, not as a definitive statement which answers all the questions raised in the reviews. Its basic aim is to use the information in the reviews to throw new light on Kaiser's plays and to stimulate the modern reader into approaching them from a fresh perspective. The commentary responds to the information in the reviews; its diversified nature (the mixture of theatre history, stylistic analysis, critical commentary, social and political analysis) simply mirrors the information contained in the reviews, reflecting their pluralistic character. The commentary contrasts the views of the contemporaries with post-war opinions, examines

---

<sup>29</sup>Rühle and Schürer follow a similar practice. Cf. Rühle, p. 61, p. 321, p. 361, p. 362 and E. Schürer, *Erläuterungen*, p. 59, p. 75 and *Georg Kaiser* (New York: Twayne, 1971), p. 227, note 12.





how the plays were staged and, at times, reinterprets them in the light of the reviews. Kaiser's breakthrough as a dramatist, his problems with the censors, political attitudes towards Kaiser, the categorisation of his plays and their topicality in their social context are some of the many problems treated. Up to now, there has been little analysis of the reception of Kaiser's dramas on the German stage.<sup>30</sup>

For the sake of clarity and easy reference, each play is treated separately. When dealing with Kaiser's lesser-known dramas, the examination of the reviews is preceded by a short introductory section which attempts to orientate the reader through a discussion of the drama's place in Kaiser's "oeuvre" and of the opinions of the leading Kaiser critics. For lack of space and because of the nature of this study, the views of Kaiser's contemporaries as expressed in the reviews have been given priority over a thorough examination of post-war critical opinions. When dealing with Kaiser's major works like *Die Bürger von Calais*, *Von morgens bis mitternachts* and *Gas I*, I have assumed a greater familiarity on the part of the reader with these works.

-----  
<sup>30</sup>Only two articles have been written on the reception of Kaiser's dramas: Leroy R. Shaw, "Georg Kaiser auf der deutschsprachigen Bühne 1945-1960," *Maske und Kothurn*, 9 (1963), 68-86 and R. A. Jones, "German Drama on the American Stage: The Case of Georg Kaiser," *German Quarterly*, 37 (1964), 17-25. However, they deal with other areas from my field of study - the reception of Kaiser's dramas in the German-speaking countries from 1915-45.



With Jost Hermand, we believe that reviews are an important part of literary study:

Was könnte nicht alles zur Literatur gehören, wenn wir endlich mit jenem Ästhetizismus brechen wollten, nach dem nur das dreigleisig Festgefahrene, das Drama, das Gedicht und die 'Erzählung' (einmal im weitesten Sinne verstanden) den Rang des Literaturhaften hat? Reiseberichte, Memoiren, Tagebücher, Biographien, Aphorismen, Briefe, Essays, Reden, Rezensionen, ja alle Arten der Zweck- und Gebrauchsliteratur würden damit endlich aus ihrer babylonischen Verbannung erlöst und zu ebenso wichtigen Dokumenten des menschlichen Geistes erhoben wie eine epigonenhafte Ode oder ein halbgelungener Roman.<sup>31</sup>

A review is "eine Quelle der Information"<sup>32</sup> and reviews from earlier periods reveal historical information which is unknown to the modern reader.<sup>33</sup> Barbara Glauert justifies her documentation of Carl Zuckmayer reviews by remarking that these provide a source of historical, literary and political information:

Zeitgenössische Rezensionen bieten dem Leser mehrfache Information: sie fördern zunächst das Verständnis des besprochenen Werkes durch Kurzinterpretationen, die das Stück mittels seiner Zeitbezogenheit in den jeweiligen historischen Zusammenhang stellen. [...] Neben dem literarischen Urteil tritt auch die aktuelle Zeitgeschichte aus den Rezensionen hervor, hier die Zeit zwischen 1920

---

<sup>31</sup>Jost Hermand, "Vom Gebrauchswert der Rezension," in *Kritik der Literaturkritik*, ed. O. Schwencke (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973), pp. 36-37.

<sup>32</sup>Hermand, p. 32.

<sup>33</sup>Hermand writes of Raabe's and Fontane's novels: "Auf jeden Fall lesen wir aus diesen Werken viel weniger heraus als die halbwegs gebildeten Literaturkonsumenten der achtziger und neunziger Jahre, denen noch der ganze zeitgenössische Anspielungsreichtum eines *Abu Telfan* oder der *Poggenpuhls* ohne weiteres verständlich war. Und hier ist es, wo uns die Literaturwissenschaft mit Hilfe von Memoiren, Briefen, aber auch Rezensionen auf die Sprünge helfen kann, indem sie unser historisches und literarisches Assoziationsvermögen mit aufhellenden Fussnoten und Kommentaren zu erweitern versucht" (pp. 32-33).





und 1975: politische, soziale und literarische Strömungen werden aufgezeigt, Tendenzen und Entwicklungen zeichnen sich ab.<sup>3 4</sup>

For Hermand, the quality of the review is not important:

Im Hinblick auf die blosse Information ist es daher für die Literaturwissenschaft relativ gleichgültig, wie gut oder wie miserabel eine Rezension geschrieben ist. Manchmal sind es gerade die 'brillanten' Besprechungen, mit denen man als Literaturhistoriker besonders wenig anfangen kann, da man in ihnen mehr über das psychologische Make-up des jeweiligen Rezensenten als über das besprochene Werk erfährt. Langweiler und Pedanten, die bloss referieren, sind hier oft viel brauchbarer, da man von ihnen einfach mehr erfährt.<sup>3 5</sup>

This study will, therefore, attempt to fill the gap in Kaiser research referred to by Manfred Durzak: "Die Aufarbeitung von Kaisers Bühnenrezeption stellt noch ein Desideratum der Forschung dar [...]"<sup>3 6</sup>

---

<sup>3 4</sup>B. Glauert, "Editorischer Hinweis," *Carl Zuckmayer – Das Bühnenwerk im Spiegel der Kritik*, pp. xv–xvi.

<sup>3 5</sup>Hermand, p. 34.

<sup>3 6</sup>M. Durzak, *Das expressionistische Drama*, I (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1978), 185–86, note 22.





## B. The Major Expressionist Dramas: 1915–33. Georg Kaiser's Breakthrough as an Expressionist

### Introduction

From 1915–33, 39 of Georg Kaiser's plays were premiered, the number rising to 44 if one includes the premieres of revised versions of older plays<sup>1</sup> and if one counts separately the premieres of works produced as different genres.<sup>2</sup> During this period, apart from 1916 and 1932, at least one Kaiser play was premiered each year. According to W. Steffens, Georg Kaiser "war von 1917 bis 1933 der erfolgreichste deutsche Dramatiker";<sup>3</sup> according to E. Schürer, Kaiser in the 1920's was "the best-known German playwright".<sup>4</sup> W. Huder writes of Kaiser (from 1915–33):

-----  
'*David und Goliath*, "Komödie in drei Akten", which had been produced for the first time as *Grossbürger Möller*, "Lustspiel in vier Akten" in 1915, was premiered in its rewritten form in 1922; *Der Brand im Opernhaus* was premiered in Hamburg and Nuremberg in 1918 and then in a revised version in Berlin (26.11.1918); *Margarine*, which had been premiered as *Der Zentaur*, "Komödie in fünf Aufzügen" (23.10.1917), was presented in its new form as a "Lustspiel in vier Akten" in Berlin (4.9.1925). All information in this study with regard to the versions of Kaiser's dramas, their publication, premieres, etc. is based on the bibliography in Georg Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. W. Huder, VI (Berlin: Propyläen, 1972), 859–927, unless otherwise stated. I only refer to specific pages within this bibliography when Huder's information appears doubtful.

<sup>1</sup>*Juana* was first performed as a "Schauspiel" in 1918 and as an "Oper" in 1925; *Der Protagonist* was premiered also as a "Schauspiel" in 1922 and as an "Oper" in 1926.

<sup>2</sup>W. Steffens, *Kaiser* (Velber: Friedrich, 1969), p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 7.



"[Er] übertrifft jetzt mit mehr als vierzig Uraufführungen [...] die Bühnenkarriere aller Zeitgenossen."<sup>5</sup> Of 3,284 premieres in Germany between 1913 and 1922, Kaiser had the most with 21, compared to Herbert Eulenberg's 18, Carl Sternheim's 13, Gerhart Hauptmann's 7 and Hermann Sudermann's 7.<sup>6</sup>

The period 1917–20 revealed Kaiser at the height of his fame with seventeen premieres (and the premiere of one revised version), which included his major Expressionist plays (*Die Bürger von Calais*, *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, *Die Koralle*, *Gas I*, *Hölle Weg Erde* and *Gas II*) and the discovery of some of his earlier comedies and tragedies (e.g. *Die Sorina*, *Die Versuchung*).

The leading theatres for Kaiser from 1915–20 were the Neues Theater, Frankfurt/Main, with seven premieres (*Die Bürger von Calais*; *Die Koralle*, joint premiere; *Gas I*, joint premiere; *Claudius*, joint premiere; *Friedrich und Anna*, joint premiere; *Juana*, joint premiere and *Hölle Weg Erde*), the Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf, with three premieres (*Grossbürger Möller*, *Das Frauenopfer* and *Gas I*, joint premiere) and the Kammerspiele, Munich, with two (*Von morgens bis mitternachts* and *Die Koralle*, joint premiere). The leading directors were Arthur Hellmer in Frankfurt, Gustav Lindemann in Düsseldorf and Otto Falckenberg in

-----  
<sup>5</sup>Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 853.

<sup>6</sup>W. Frels, *Das literarische Echo*, 27 (1924–25), 125. This is not quite accurate. Kaiser, between 1913 and 1922, actually had 22 premieres and two premieres of revised versions (*Der Brand im Opernhaus*, 1918, and *David und Goliath*, 1922).





Munich.

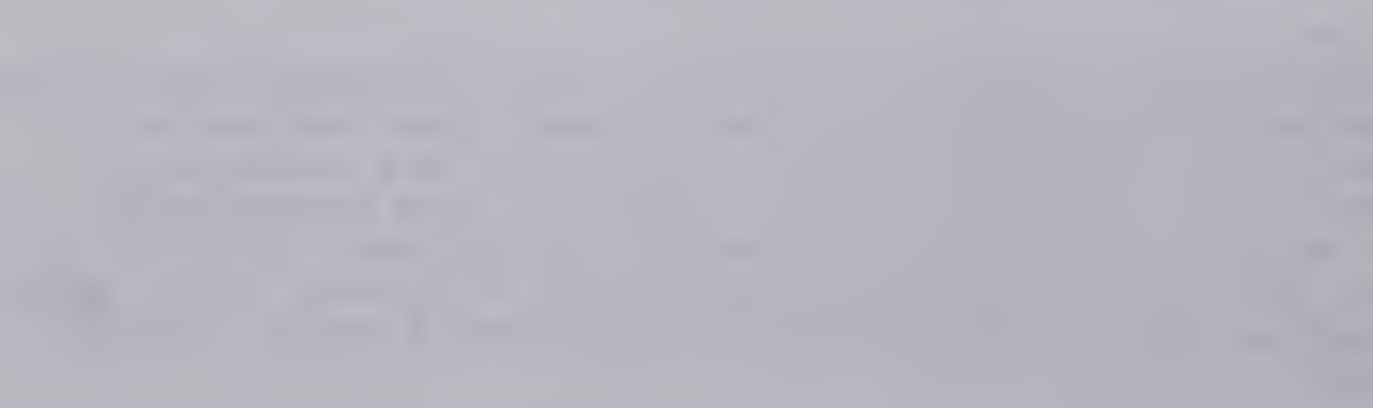
None of the six major Expressionist plays was premiered in Berlin. Indeed, during the period 1915–20, when Kaiser made his breakthrough as a leading contemporary dramatist, of 20 premieres only three were in Berlin (*Die Sorina* at the Lessing-Theater, 6.3.1917; the revised version of *Der Brand im Opernhaus* at the Kleines Schauspielhaus, 26.11.1918 and *Europa* at the Grosses Schauspielhaus, 5.11.1920). The Berlin theatres were slow to discover Kaiser's plays, especially the Expressionist dramas. It was not until 1918 that a major Expressionist play, *Die Koralle*, was produced in Berlin, by which time *Die Bürger von Calais*, *Von morgens bis mitternachts* and *Die Koralle* had all been premiered in the provinces.<sup>7</sup> Kasimir Edschmid was particularly unhappy with the failure of the Berlin theatres to keep pace with the latest dramatic developments compared to the provincial theatres, which were more prepared to present the avantgarde dramas of Expressionism. He writes in 1917:

Die ersten Schritte der neuen Kunst geschehen abseits von Berlin. Aus der Provinz hebt sich immer deutlicher die Kraft und setzt sich, was viel erstaunlicher ist, in der Provinz selbst durch. Man hat Schickele, man hat Hasenclever nicht in Berlin zur Uraufführung gebracht. Frankfurt bringt nun die stärkste dramatische Begabung der jüngeren Generation im Neuen Theater.<sup>8</sup>

-----  
<sup>7</sup>Censorship was also a problem – e.g. a production of *Von morgens bis mitternachts* had already been banned at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin before it was eventually premiered in Munich. See G. Kaiser, "Ein Stosseufzer" (1917) in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV (Berlin: Propyläen, 1971), 543.

<sup>8</sup>K. Edschmid, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 4.2.1917, in G. Rühle, *Theater für die Republik 1917–33* (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1967), p. 54.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the underlying mechanisms of the observed phenomena. It is argued that a comprehensive understanding of the system is essential for developing effective interventions. The second part of the paper presents a detailed analysis of the data, highlighting the key findings and their implications. The third part of the paper discusses the limitations of the study and suggests directions for future research.





Likewise, Kaiser's breakthrough as an Expressionist came not in Berlin but in Frankfurt/M., Munich and Düsseldorf. Gradually, the Berlin theatres caught up with the times and the major Expressionist plays were presented to the Berlin public. The leading theatres were the Deutsches Theater (with productions of *Die Koralie*, 1918, and *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, 1919), the Volksbühne (with productions of *Gas I* and *Die Bürger von Calais* in 1919) and the Lessing-Theater (with productions of *Hölle Weg Erde*, 1920, and *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, 1921). The main directors were Felix Hollaender, Paul Legband and Viktor Barnowsky.

However, Kaiser's success was not to be limited to Germany. His plays were soon produced all over the world, as F. A. Angermayer writes in the 1920's: "London und Rom, Madrid und Amsterdam, Kopenhagen und Budapest, Tokio und Moskau, Prag und Bukarest, um nur die führenden Zentralstädte zu nennen, öffneten diesem Dichter ihre Schauspielhäuser".<sup>9</sup> Huder also mentions productions of Kaiser's plays during the Weimar Republic in New York, Warsaw, Paris and Sydney.<sup>10</sup>

The first two of Kaiser's dramas to be premiered, *Der Fall des Schülers Vehgesack* and *Grossbürger Möller*, both in 1915, made little impact. *Der Fall des Schülers Vehgesack*, "Szenen einer kleinen deutschen Komödie", of which a first version was written in 1901-02, was published privately in

-----

<sup>9</sup>F. A. Angermayer, "Die Auswirkung deutscher Dramatik im Ausland," in *Das literarische Echo*, 26 (1923-24), 132.

<sup>10</sup>Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 853-54.



1914 (Weimar: R. Wagner Sohn). It was premiered by the Neue Bühne in Vienna (11.2.1915) with Emil Geyer as director, this being the first public performance of a Kaiser play. If Alfred Polgar's review (1)<sup>1</sup> of this production is typical, it was far from an overwhelming success. Finding the play's sub-title too apologetic, he disliked its clichéd characters and heavy-handed humour. Compared to the elegance and lightness of touch often associated with Viennese comedy (e.g. Schnitzler's *Anatol*), *Der Fall des Schülers Vehgesack* was too "German" for Polgar's taste, too tough and indigestible.

*Grossbürger Möller*, which was published privately as "Ein gewinnendes Spiel in vier Akten" in 1914 (Weimar: R. Wagner Sohn) and then as a "Lustspiel in vier Akten" in 1915 (Berlin: S. Fischer), was premiered at the Schauspielhaus in Düsseldorf (20.11.1915). This first public production of a Kaiser play in Germany ran for seven performances. It was the first of a long series of Kaiser productions at the theatre which had been founded by Louise Dumont and the director Gustav Lindemann in 1904.<sup>12</sup>

-----  
<sup>1</sup> The number after a critic's name in round brackets refers to the number of a review in the documentation section. Alfred Polgar (1873–1955), who was noted for his humorous reviews, wrote for the *Vossische Zeitung*, *Die Schaubühne* and *Die Weltbühne*. At first, he was based in Vienna; later, in 1924, he moved to Berlin. See Rühle, p. 1174.

<sup>12</sup> Gustav Lindemann (1872–1960) directed the following Kaiser plays at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus: *Das Frauenopfer* (Uraufführung, 23.3.1918), *Gas I* (Uraufführung, 28.11.1918), *Zweimal Oliver* (Uraufführung, 15.4.1926), *Papiermühle* (Erstaufführung, 28.5.1927), *Oktoberfest* (Erstaufführung, 25.9.1928), *Die Bürger von Calais* (15.12.1928) and *Mississippi* (Uraufführung, 20.9.1930). In addition, the following Kaiser plays were produced there by other





### *Die Bürger von Calais*

*Die Bürger von Calais*, "Bühnenspiel in drei Akten", which had been published in 1914 (Berlin: S. Fischer), was the first of Kaiser's Expressionist plays to be premiered – on 29.1.1917 at the Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. (directed by Arthur Hellmer). Hellmer had become interested in staging the play after reading Gustav Landauer's essay "Ein Weg deutschen Geistes (Goethe, Stifter, Kaiser)" in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (6.2.1916).<sup>12</sup> This is generally considered the production which achieved Kaiser's breakthrough as a dramatist after many years of obscurity. Kenworthy says that this premiere "brought Kaiser immediate fame";<sup>14</sup> it is described by Huder as Kaiser's "erster tatsächlicher Bühnenerfolg".<sup>15</sup>

-----  
<sup>12</sup>(cont'd)directors: *Grossbürger Möller* (Uraufführung, 20.11.1915), "Die Milchstrasse" – *Claudius, Friedrich und Anna und Juana* (Erstaufführung, 16.9.1919), *Der Brand im Opernhaus* (Erstaufführung, 30.9.1921), *Der Protagonist* (Erstaufführung, 2.6.1922), *Nebeneinander* (16.4.1925), *Der mutige Seefahrer* (Erstaufführung, 31.5.1926), *Hellseherei* (19.10.1929) and *Europa* (10.1.1931). See M. Linke, *Gustav Lindemann* (Düsseldorf: Triltsch, 1969), p. 5, pp. 244–50 and p. 217, note 4. Although I visited the "Dumont-Lindemann-Archiv" in Düsseldorf (April 1982) and collected reviews of many of these productions, I was unable to find any reviews of the premiere of *Grossbürger Möller*.

<sup>13</sup>Kaiser had met Gustav Landauer in 1916. See Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 852 and Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 98.

<sup>14</sup>B. J. Kenworthy, *Georg Kaiser* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957), p. xviii.

<sup>15</sup>Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 852.





From a modern perspective, the lack of interest in the play immediately after its publication in 1914 is usually explained as resulting from the fact that its message of pacifism was ahead of the times and out of tune with the atmosphere of patriotism and militarism which accompanied the outbreak of the First World War. Kenworthy writes:

Kaiser's drama, an argued condemnation of war, was published in 1914; no theatre, however, was willing to stage it either immediately before the First World War or during its first three years. Nevertheless, Kaiser was expressing the growing feeling of considerable numbers of his countrymen, for the pacific inclination of many German Social Democrats had already been publicly declared by 1917. [...] Thus Kaiser, with his own interpretation of an episode from the year 1347 [...] anticipates the decision before the German people towards the end of the war of 1914-18: whether to fight on to utter destruction or save something of their country by surrender.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, by 1917, the mood of the German people had moved towards Kaiser's pacifism; the success of the premiere of *Die Bürger von Calais* is seen as the result of the play's sudden relevance in a changed climate of disillusionment with the war:

In the middle of World War I, after more than two years of suffering and death, the audience quickly took up his [Kaiser's] call for a new heroism in the service of peace. The premiere was a spectacular success, and overnight Kaiser's fame spread throughout Germany.<sup>17</sup>

For Schürer, this premiere was crucial not just for Georg Kaiser but also for the breakthrough of Expressionist drama in general; it

-----  
had the same importance for Expressionism that the

<sup>16</sup>Kenworthy, p. 30.

<sup>17</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 19.



first performance of Hauptmann's *Vor Sonnenaufgang* on October 20, 1889, had for Naturalism. The play ushered in a new epoch in the history of German drama and started the so-called Frankfurt Expressionism.<sup>18</sup>

Georg Kaiser's contemporaries in Frankfurt/M. viewed the premiere of *Die Bürger von Calais* with mixed feelings. Although, in comparison to *Hölle Weg Erde* and *Gas II*, this was not the most avantgarde of Kaiser's Expressionist works, it was however sufficiently modern to provoke opposing reactions from the reviewers, depending on their preconceptions towards literature in general. On the one hand, as with any new art form, there were inflexible critics who did not adapt their criteria to this new work nor did they try to approach it on its own terms. Instead, they merely appraised the work according to old, traditional criteria which were inappropriate and thus failed to reveal the essence of the new work. Heinrich Simon (2) was an example of this type of critic trying to measure the new movement of Expressionism against out-moded values.<sup>19</sup> Describing the style of the production as disunified and contradictory, he praised the Schillerian presentation of the first act, which was performed "wie ein richtiges Theaterstück". Because of its clarity and powerful subject matter, its effect was great and lasting. Here, Wendt's performance as Jean de Vienne was full of pathos and Ehrle was an heroic Duguesclins. Preferring the non-Expressionist

<sup>18</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 98.

<sup>19</sup>Heinrich Simon (1880-1941) worked for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which had been founded by his grandfather Leopold Sonnemann. See Rühle, p. 1175.





aspects of the production, Simon complained that the play's action lacked organic growth, that the second act was monotonous, that the symbolism of the Last Supper was hardly original and tasteful and that Kaiser's message represented nothing but "alte Wahrheiten". Misunderstanding the importance of the process of regeneration in an Expressionist drama essentially concerned with depicting the "Neuer Mensch", he considered the work finished after the first act and the last two acts unimportant. Simon, therefore, because of his adherence to Classical notions, completely missed the significance and new dramatic developments of the work which he was reviewing.

On the other hand, Kasimir Edschmid (3), as a member of the younger (Expressionist) generation,<sup>2°</sup> was much more willing to understand *Die Bürger von Calais* on its own terms as a work belonging to a new artistic movement. In contrast to Simon, he particularly appreciated the play for its Expressionist features, realising that Kaiser's aim was not to present a psychologically realistic, historical drama but to present universal values. Like Simon, he objected to the mixture of styles in Arthur Hellmer's production but, unlike Simon, he desired a consistently Expressionist performance. Edschmid criticised the very elements which Simon praised.

-----  
<sup>2°</sup>Kasimir Edschmid (1890-1966) belonged to the same generation as the Expressionist writers Ernst Toller (b. 1893), Johannes Becher (b. 1891), Franz Werfel (b. 1890), Reinhard Sorge (b. 1892) and Hanns Johst (b. 1890). As a critic, he covered the theatres in Frankfurt and Darmstadt for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and the *Vossische Zeitung*. As a writer, he published short stories and novels. See Rühle, p. 1162.



He felt that the bombastic gestures of Schillerian acting were inappropriate and that they threatened to cause a loss of style and to cheapen the production by pushing it away from Expressionism towards the "Ritterstück".

Richard Dohse's reaction (4) was more mixed. Although he praised Kaiser's dramatic ability and powerful language, he felt that Kaiser, at times, was too verbose and that his symbolism was obscure and difficult to understand, so that the play's dramatic effect was weakened to a certain extent. According to Simon, the Frankfurt public followed this premiere "teils beifällig, teils respektvoll"; according to Dohse, there was lively applause.

Before reaching Berlin towards the end of 1919, *Die Bürger von Calais* was produced at the Neue Bühne in Vienna (14.10.1917) and at the Weimar Hoftheater (1918). In Vienna, Alfred Polgar's attitude towards Kaiser in 1917 (5) was no more favourable than it had been in 1915. Finding this Expressionist play unusual, he was unimpressed by its language, by its icy atmosphere, its highly abstract ideas and the attempts to intellectualise a simple anecdote. Although, like Simon in Frankfurt, he praised the powerful first act, he denounced the performance on the whole, despite Gottowt's colourful atmospheric production, as a form of torture. In particular, he condemned the second and third acts as unclear and over-intellectual. Unable to understand the work, which was even less comprehensible on the stage, Polgar could only write a very negative review.





Even more hostile was the critic in Weimar, Herwig, whose review (6) appeared in the "kulturpolitisch katholischen Zeitschrift"<sup>21</sup> *Hochland*. He rejected *Die Bürger von Calais* as a contrived drama with artificial "characters", written by a dramatist who, in trying to be clever, had made the play too complicated. Herwig criticised the play's lack of warmth, the lack of clarity to the language and the obscurity clouding the reasons for Eustache's death. He concluded that Kaiser was just a pretentious, would-be author, whose tragedy was that he continued to churn out dramas, even though he displayed no sign of genius. What is important about this review is that, already in 1918, it anticipated the burning of Kaiser's works by the Nazis in May, 1933. With reactionary fervour, Herwig denounced *Die Bürger von Calais* as representative of all that was wrong in contemporary literature, describing it as "eine unheilbar moderne Dichtung, verseucht vom Intellektualismus". Herwig saw the political implications of the play as unpatriotic, as similar to the internationalism which would surrender Germany to any opponent (now the King of England, in the future the King of Spain or the Sultan). Such pacifism would reduce the Germans to mere "Sklaven ohne Ehre".<sup>22</sup>

-----  
<sup>21</sup>E. Schürer, *Georg Kaiser: Von morgens bis mitternachts. Erläuterungen und Dokumente* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975), p. 90. See also Fritz Schlawe, *Literarische Zeitschriften*, I (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965<sup>2</sup>), 93-94 and II (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1962), 91-93.

<sup>22</sup>Likewise, the Nazis accused the Magdeburg Stadttheater, where Kaiser's *Der Silbersee* was premiered (18.2.1933), of being unpatriotic in reducing art to the level of Bolshevik





The first production of *Die Bürger von Calais* in Berlin, at the Volksbühne (27.9.1917), was very badly received by the Berlin critics. Although the first Expressionist play by Kaiser to be premiered, it did not reach Berlin until after productions of *Die Koralle* (17.1.1918), *Von morgens bis mitternachts* (31.1.1919) and *Gas I* (25.2.1919). As in Vienna, Ernst Stahl-Nachbaur played the part of Eustache. Siegfried Jacobsohn (8)<sup>23</sup> praised the play for its social relevance, for being ahead of its time in advocating pacifism before the horror of the First World War had manifested itself. He saw the conflict between Eustache and Duguesclins as anticipating the choice which faced the German people in November 1918 – Eisner or Ludendorff, pacifism or militarism, surrender or death and glory. Many critics, echoing Simon's remarks in Frankfurt, applauded the first act but regarded the second and third acts as an anti-climax. Karl Strecker (12)<sup>24</sup>

-----  
<sup>22</sup>(cont'd)propaganda. Ignoring the ethical, reconciliatory aspects of this "Wintermärchen", which they described as a "kommunistisches Tendenz-Stück", they condemned the revue for inciting violence and class conflict (555, 560).

<sup>23</sup>Siegfried Jacobsohn (1881–1926) founded *Die Schaubühne* in 1905 which became *Die Weltbühne* in 1918. Schlawe writes that this magazine, which grew more and more politically orientated, developed into the "bedeutendsten und einflussreichsten Zeitschrift der deutschen Linken" (I, 102). Its contributors included Alfred Polgar, Kurt Tucholsky and W. Benjamin. In 1930, its circulation was about 15,000. See Rühle, pp. 1169–70; Schlawe, I, 101–02 and II, 79–81.

<sup>24</sup>Karl Strecker (1862–1933) was a critic for the *Tägliche Rundschau*, which had a circulation of about 30,000. Rühle writes of him: "Er war Sohn eines Rittergutsbesitzers [...], zeitweilig Offizier [...]. Seine durch seine Herkunft erklärte nationale Gesinnung färbt seine Kritiken, durch die er mehr der Reflektor der Meinung einer bestimmten Gruppe zu einem künstlerischen Ereignis wurde als dessen kritischer



considered the first act the best which Kaiser had ever written, although he liked it only for traditional reasons. He thought that Kaiser had not spoiled this act with Expressionist devices (such as "Telegrammstil") and that, for once, he had presented real characters and realistic confrontations. Unfortunately, however, after this masterly exposition, the drama deteriorated! Norbert Falk (10)<sup>2 5</sup> condemned the second act for failing to intensify the play's dramatic momentum and regarded the race to the market square in the third act as a senile idea.

Like Polgar in Vienna, even the respected critic Jacobsohn had problems understanding the play. He praised the logical clarity of the first act but found Eustache's behaviour in Acts II and III difficult to follow. He felt that Eustache's reasons for preventing a decision from being taken as to who should be saved during the lottery scene (Act II) and his reasons for the race (Act III) were not explained clearly enough until after the event. As a result, during these important scenes, he and the audience were in a state of perplexity, which undermined the dramatic effectiveness of these scenes. Other critics (11, 15) blamed Kaiser's excessive rhetoric for preventing a clear understanding of the play. With hindsight, from a modern perspective, it seems surprising that some of Kaiser's contemporaries should have had trouble understanding *Die*

<sup>2 4</sup>(cont'd)Untersucher" (pp. 1176-77).

<sup>2 5</sup>Norbert Falk worked for the *B. Z. am Mittag*, "das grösste Boulevard-Blatt Berlins", which, in 1929, had a circulation of over 200,000. See Rühle, p. 1164.





*Bürger von Calais*. This work, with its traditional dramatic features (the dialectical confrontation of Act I, the theatricality and tension of Acts II and III – the lottery scene; the race –, the historical subject-matter, the named characters, etc.) is really one of Kaiser's most accessible Expressionist dramas, not nearly as radical in terms of content as *Hölle Weg Erde* or in terms of form as *Gas II*.

For Herbert Ihering (9),<sup>26</sup> Kaiser lacked the intensity to eradicate from the play all that was inessential. Kaiser's intellectual language and monumental gestures seemed to contradict each other. By trying to be serious, Kaiser's drama lacked the tempo which alone made his plays artistically viable. Even more surprising than the fact that some critics had difficulties understanding *Die Bürger von Calais* was the fact that some of them did not consider it an Expressionist drama. As it was an early work, Strecker and Falk thought that it had been written before Kaiser's breakthrough to Expressionism. Falk criticised the effusiveness of Kaiser's rhetoric, the extravagant use of metaphors, the excessive repetitions and reformulations which fill out the text. Since Kaiser's "Telegrammstil" was regarded in 1919 as the essential characteristic of his Expressionist plays, it was concluded, therefore, that *Die*

<sup>26</sup>Herbert Ihering (1888–1977) was a critic for the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* from 1918–33. Ihering was an extremely sound, perceptive critic and Rühle correctly describes him as "der wichtigste Kritiker unserer Epoche [1917–33] in Berlin und für das Theater im Reich". Rühle continues: "Seine Kritiken sind abrupt, massiv, autoritativ im Stil, die Wortpunkte Kerrs ist ersetzt durch die Durchschlagskraft der Argumente" (p. 1167). See Rühle, pp. 1167–68.



*Bürger von Calais* was not an Expressionist work because it was too verbose. Moreover, the critic for the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* (11)<sup>27</sup> dismissed the play as an immature early exercise in style which Kaiser had to purge from his system in order to be able to write his major Expressionist works. He objected to the ponderous, metaphorical language which was even more extravagant and obscure than that of the Symbolists and to the loquaciousness, which destroyed all clarity and genuine feelings. Through this early play, Kaiser had managed to rid himself of such empty, affected language so that he could go on to create works with a powerful, concise, pregnant language in the new Expressionist style. It is quite remarkable that a drama often considered today one of THE major Expressionist dramas<sup>28</sup> was rejected by leading contemporary critics as a minor experiment.

However, the failure of this first Berlin production of *Die Bürger von Calais* was not entirely Kaiser's fault. As well, the director Paul Legband<sup>29</sup> and the actors were subjected to fierce criticism. The Volksbühne came under

-----  
<sup>27</sup>W. H. is probably Willi Handl, who worked as a critic for the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*. See Rühle, p. 1165.

<sup>28</sup>Cf. Walter H. Sokel, who described Kaiser's *Die Bürger von Calais* as "probably his greatest work" and as "one of the most powerful dramas of Expressionist pacifism". He saw *Die Bürger von Calais* and Fritz von Unruh's *Ein Geschlecht* as "landmarks of the [Expressionist] movement", *The Writer in Extremis* (Stanford: University, 1959), p. 108, p. 172 and p. 184.

<sup>29</sup>Legband had directed the first successful production in Berlin of one of Kaiser's Expressionist plays (*Gas I*) earlier in the year at the Volksbühne. Unfortunately he was unable to repeat this success with *Die Bürger von Calais*.





attack for being over-ambitious in attempting to produce a play which it did not have the means to stage effectively (14). Falk considered *Die Bürger von Calais* a totally inappropriate choice for a "Volksbühne" and incompatible with the aims of that theatre. He felt that the Volksbühne had an obligation to produce enjoyable, stimulating plays, which exerted a positive, uplifting effect on the audience, not works like Kaiser's which only achieved "Zermürbung und Ermüdung". It was wrong for the Volksbühne to waste its money on such "unvolkstümlichen Experimenten". Max Hochdorf (13) thought that Legband's production did not do justice to the text because it was too traditional and diluted the dramatic power of Kaiser's original. Ihering also was unhappy with Legband's work as director. He criticised Legband's weakness in failing to eliminate anything which might detract from the effectiveness of the production. Legband was not ruthless enough with regard to his actors and failed to cut those parts of the text which were unnecessary. As a result, Rothauser as Eustache's father was a torment and Helene Fehdmer's drawn-out performance as the mother of one of the volunteers completely misunderstood the style of the play. Falk, referring to Rothauser's "bedrohlich komischem Solo", found his speech unnecessarily verbose and Monty Jacobs<sup>30</sup> complained that Rothauser mumbled the play's most important words into his beard. Falk also

-----  
<sup>30</sup>Monty Jacobs (1875-1945), an influential critic, was mainly associated with the *Vossische Zeitung*. See Rühle, pp. 1168-69.





considered Helene Fehdmer's acting totally inadequate.

For Ihering, even Ernst Stahl-Nachbaur lacked "die letzte Intensität, die nur aus dem Zwange des Körpers kommt"; Falk found Stahl-Nachbaur's voice clear and noble but "ohne innerste Hingegebenheit". Hochdorf complained that the actors over-emphasized the rhetorical at the expense of passion. The mass scenes were dismissed as too weak (15), as lacking life and as too "dressiert" (13). The tempo of the production was slow and the acting drawn-out.<sup>31</sup> Inevitably, Legband was compared to Max Reinhardt and just as inevitably the comparison was unfavourable. Jacobs thought that the crowd scenes were particularly suited to Reinhardt's style of theatre and that Legband only offered a poor imitation.

Watching this slow, boring production was an endurance test, "eine Geduldsprobe in drei Akten" (14). The public seemed to prefer the play's more traditional elements:

Solange die neue Tat brüllend über die Szene donnerte, jauchzten die Volksbühnenleute! Wenn neue Menschen mit altem Pathos sich ihnen sudermännisch ins Herze, das goldene, spielten, waren sies zufrieden. Als der neue Geist beredt wurde, zischten sie ihn an.<sup>32</sup>

As the production progressed, the audience became more and more disenchanted: "Die Aufführung sank mit dem Stück [...]. Die Zuhörer der Volksbühne, musterhaft geduldig wie stets, wurden zusehends kühler, unberührter, ratloser."<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup>C. F.: "Die Regie unterstrich das Monumentale, sie dehnte die Kunstpausen und zerrte an der Geduld der Hörer" (*Berliner Mittagszeitung*, 29.9.1919, in *Die Kritik*, 1919, No. 7, p. 161).

<sup>32</sup>K.-r., *Berliner Börsen Zeitung*, 28.9.1919, in *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 6, p. 136.

<sup>33</sup>M. O., *Berliner Morgenpost*, 30.9.1919, in *Die Kritik*



Despite the poor production, there was some applause:

Das Vereinspublikum, dankbar wie immer, liess es an Beifall nicht fehlen und rief den Dichter auf die Bühne. Dass der Erfolg nur äusserlich war, bewies die an mehr als einer Stelle eintretende Unaufmerksamkeit des überfüllten Hauses.<sup>3 4</sup>

In June 1920, *Die Bürger von Calais* was performed for the first time in Halle, at the Stadttheater (directed by Dr. Edgar Gross), as part of the cycle "Das Drama der Jugend in Deutschland". Erich Sellheim (16) considered it a typical Kaiser play, which, although it failed to present real characters, deserved to be praised for its theatricality, its dialectical confrontations and the tension of the lottery scene in the second act. Like Jacobsohn in Berlin, the Halle critics found Kaiser's play extremely topical. Sellheim saw the fate of Calais as reflecting that of Germany after the First World War – both had to accept the wretched conditions which surrender imposed on them. Adolf Meyer (17) viewed the conflict between Duguesclins and Eustache as really a conflict between the militarism of August 1914 and the contemporary (i.e. post-November 1918) spirit of pacifism and internationalism. He even described the work as "den Maximen des Kommunismus geweiht", as propagating an idea of communism, compared to which the death of six hostages was but a small price to pay. Kaiser's play was part of a Marxist revolution in art which anticipated and laid the intellectual foundations for the

-----  
<sup>3 3</sup> (cont'd) (1919), No. 7, p. 162.

• <sup>3 4</sup> K. S., *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 29.9.1919, in *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 7, p. 162.





social change of 1918. Meyer was unimpressed by Gustav Landauer's enthusiastic response to *Die Bürger von Calais*, seeing a contradiction between Landauer's admiration for the new political morality and pacifism of Kaiser's play and his practical behaviour, his incitement to murder and bloody revolution against the citizens of Munich.<sup>35</sup> Meyer praised the excellent production, which compensated for the deficiencies in Kaiser's text.

On 21.11.1928, *Die Bürger von Calais* was produced by Dr. Otto Liebscher at the Stadttheater, Osnabrück, the seventh play by Kaiser to be performed in Osnabrück.<sup>36</sup> Even now, the play still seemed topical, Duguesclins being seen to represent those right-wing officers who, despite the carnage of the First World War, still continued to complain, during the Weimar Republic, about Germany's "loss of honour":

Er [Duguesclins] muss zuschlagen können, sonst begreift er nichts. Sind in ihm nicht die Generäle des Weltkrieges getroffen, die alle nicht opferten und jetzt über die verlorene Ehre zetern? Dieses Bühnenspiel von den *Bürgern von Calais* ist von

-----

<sup>35</sup>In addition to his interest in literature, Gustav Landauer (1870–1919) was also active politically. After the collapse of the Bavarian Soviet Republic, he was brutally murdered by the reactionary "Freikorps" (2.5.1919). Kaiser wrote on hearing the news: "Gustav Landauer tot –: sie haben in seinem Kopf den Himmel entzwei geschossen. Ich fühle mich masslos beraubt [...]" (letter to Otto Liebscher, 17.5.1919, in *Briefe*, ed. Gesa Valk [Berlin: Propyläen, 1980], p. 168).  
<sup>36</sup>Otto Liebscher was responsible for Kaiser productions in Nuremberg, Osnabrück, Munich and Cologne. Dr. Hannss refers to this 1928 production as the Erstaufführung of *Die Bürger von Calais* in Osnabrück – n.d., n.s., GKC. However, Huder reports that the Uraufführung of "Fassung 4" of *Die Bürger von Calais* took place on 4.12.1923 at the Stadttheater, Osnabrück – Kaiser, *Werke*, VI, 870. I could find no evidence of this Uraufführung.



glühender Aktualität.<sup>37</sup>

Liebscher's production was praised in particular for its mass scenes and Ludwig Zuckermandel-Bassermann's sets seemed to make effective use of symbolism.<sup>38</sup>

1928 was a good year for Kaiser productions as it was the 50th anniversary of his birthday (25.11.1878). This same year, Gustav Lindemann presented *Die Bürger von Calais* at the Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf (15.12.1928), "in der wohl richtigsten, abstraktesten Inszenierung".<sup>39</sup> With 27 performances, this was the most successful Kaiser production at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus.<sup>40</sup> Lindemann seems to have heeded those Berlin critics who condemned the play for its torturous verbosity:

Lindemann strich – ganz gegen die sonstige Gepflogenheit – sehr viel. Die Spieldauer war verhältnismässig kurz; sie betrug (ohne Pause) eindreiviertel Stunden (37, 40 und 25 Minuten dauerten die einzelnen Akte).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup>H. W., n.d., n.s., GKC.

<sup>38</sup>-ube-: "Das Beste aber waren die vortrefflichen Massenszenen, das Ineinanderfliessen der Individuen zum Kollektivum. Das ist überhaupt Liebschers Stärke"; "Besonders eindringlich waren die symbolisch untermalenden Fenster: Kreuzigung, Kreuzabnahme und Himmelfahrt" (n.d., n.s., GKC).

<sup>39</sup>Rühle, p. 54.

<sup>40</sup>However, the number of performances was still relatively small compared to the most successful productions at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus from 1905–32: Carl Zuckmayer's *Der fröhliche Weinberg* (12.2.1926), 55 performances; Bertolt Brecht's and Kurt Weill's *Die Dreigroschenoper* (21.9.1929), 58 performances; G. B. Shaw's *Die heilige Johanna* (20.12.1924), 59 performances; Anne Nichols' *3x Hochzeit* (27.4.1929), 68 performances; Toni Impekoven's and Carl Mathern's *Die drei Zwillinge* (15.7.1919), 71 performances and Hans Müller-Schlösser's *Schneider Wibbel* (9.8.1913), 75 performances. See *Der Spielplan des Düsseldorfer Schauspielhauses Dumont-Lindemann 1905–32* (Düsseldorf: Triltsch, 1963).

<sup>41</sup>Linke, p. 115.





The final monologue of Eustache's father was cut in half; in the second act, the drawing of the lots was more accentuated. The aim of Lindemann's cuts was to make Kaiser's play more understandable and more dramatic:

Die Striche innerhalb der grossen Rede-Blöcke lassen die leitenden Gedanken stärker hervortreten, indem Nebengedanken wegfallen [...], weitschweifige und abschweifende Bilder, ein Teil der überbordenden Fragen gekürzt sind und schon erörterte Tatbestände nicht wiederholt werden. Der rhetorische Stil wird etwas zurückgedrängt, bleibt jedoch durchaus erkennbar. Der Dialog wird knapper, infolgedessen überschaubarer, schneller zwischen den Dialogpartnern wechselnd, also dramatischer.<sup>42</sup>

The critic for the Düsseldorf *Freiheit* (18) was amused by the contrast between the capitalist local audience, who applauded the production enthusiastically, and the citizens of Calais. Whereas the six volunteers were willing to sacrifice their lives for their fellow citizens and to save their town, the German capitalist class was making the workers pay for the war losses. Instead of making any sacrifices, they were collaborating with their conquerors in exploiting the working class even more severely. This critic, therefore, thought that *Die Bürger von Calais* was dated because its spirit of noble self-sacrifice was not at all viable, given the contemporary situation. The delay in performing the play, when it was first published, was also understandable because its favourable presentation of an English king, who spares the lives of six Frenchmen, was too unacceptable politically during the early years of the First World War.

---

<sup>42</sup>Linke, p. 115.





For this performance, Lindemann assembled a talented cast with Franz Everth, Hermann Greid and Peter Esser in the main parts and with actors of the calibre of Luis Rainer, Friedrich Rosenthal and Louise Dumont (appearing on the stage again after a long absence) in minor roles. The solemnity of the evening was increased by the music of the Köhler-Hedler-Quartet, who played pieces by Mozart and Beethoven. This fine, harmonious, colourful production, with its powerful mass scenes, received rousing applause from the capacity audience (19, 20).

Eduard Sturm's abstract, symbolic sets, which completely avoided historical realism, were particularly impressive. Still, despite their abstractness, they offered the actors many practical possibilities (20). Linke writes:

Eduard Sturms Bühnenarchitektur fasste die drei Akte in einen vom Bühnenboden schräg aufsteigenden Ring, in und um den der jeweilige Schauplatz mit wenigen Mitteln angedeutet war. Der Ring, in dem die sieben Bürger sich sammelten, stand als Symbol ihres zum Opfer bereiten Zusammenschlusses. Die Gliederung des Bühnenbodens gestattete das Herausheben der als Individualitäten angelegten Einzelgestalten aus der Masse, die als ein Körper am Rande des Kreisringes agierte. Die konzentrierende Einfachheit, die Details ausschliessende schlichte Monumentalität der szenischen Architektur spiegelte die Konzeption der Inszenierung rein wider.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup>Linke, p. 119. For photographs of Sturm's sets, see pp. 272-73.



*Von morgens bis mitternachts*

*Von morgens bis mitternachts*, Kaiser's "first 'Stationsdrama'" and "perhaps Kaiser's most expressionistic work",<sup>44</sup> was first written in 1912 and published in 1916 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). Problems with the censor delayed its premiere. Kaiser complained in 1917:

Die Zensur hat in letzter Zeit *furchtbar* gegen mich gewütet. *Von morgens bis mitternachts* ist dem Deutschen Theater in Berlin, dem Schauspielhaus in Düsseldorf, dem Neuen Theater in Frankfurt a. M. *verboten*, in München kämpfen die Kammerspiele noch um seine Freigabe, Wien hat noch keinen Bescheid. Dann wurde neulich *Der Zentaur* in Köln *verboten*. Früher in Berlin *Die jüdische Witwe*. Mein Drama *Die Muttergottes* – jetzt vom Deutschen Theater in Berlin erworben – wird wohl dasselbe Schicksal haben.<sup>45</sup>

Schürer explains the censorship thus: "Es ist verständlich, dass die Zensur im dritten Kriegsjahr negativ auf solch ein pessimistisches Stück reagierte."<sup>46</sup> *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was eventually premiered, still during the war, in a production directed by Otto Falckenberg at the Kammerspiele, Munich (28.4.1917), three months after the premiere of *Die Bürger von Calais* in Frankfurt/M. Falckenberg remarked that the production ("der grosse Erfolg vom 28. April 1917")<sup>47</sup> had been made possible "durch die Vermittlung Gerhart Hauptmanns".<sup>48</sup> There were seven performances.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>44</sup>Kenworthy, p. 24.

<sup>45</sup>Kaiser, "Ein Stosseufzer" (1917), in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 543.

<sup>46</sup>Schürer, *Erläuterungen*, p. 49.

<sup>47</sup>W. Petzet, *Otto Falckenberg: Mein Leben – Mein Theater* (Munich: Zinnen, 1944), p. 305.

<sup>48</sup>Petzet, *Falckenberg*, p. 304.

<sup>49</sup>W. Petzet, *Theater – Die Münchner Kammerspiele 1911–1972*





This was the start of the play's success: "During the following years, it was accepted by almost all famous theaters and was produced all over the world. It was considered Kaiser's best play".<sup>50</sup> In the 1920's, it was premiered in London by the Incorporated Stage Society (March 1920), in Warsaw by the Teatr Polski (21.2.1924) and in Amsterdam (18.3.1928); it was translated into English (1919), into French (1921), Polish (1924) and Dutch (1928).

With the premieres of *Die Bürger von Calais* (29.1.1917) and *Von morgens bis mitternachts* (28.4.1917), Kaiser established himself at the forefront of contemporary German drama, which was all the more amazing, as Richard Braungart (22)<sup>51</sup> remarked, because, only a few months earlier, Kaiser's name had been practically unknown. Kaiser's dramas now seemed in tune with the times. *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was praised for its language, which seemed to reflect the feverish pace of contemporary life (24), and for its structure and philosophical ideas (22). In particular, the dramatic power of the scenes with the Kassierer's family (21) and the Salvation Army (24) was acclaimed. Kaiser's work was seen as a reaction against Naturalism and realism (24). However, the main complaint of the Munich critics was that *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was not an original dramatic breakthrough but that it was too dependent on its

-----  
<sup>49</sup> (cont'd) (Munich: Desch, 1973), p. 122.

<sup>50</sup> Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 88.

<sup>51</sup> Richard Braungart (1872-1963) wrote, at different times, for the *Münchener Zeitung*, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and the *Münchner Merkur*. See Rühle, p. 1162.



literary predecessors. L. G. Oberlaender (23) did not see this unoriginal play as paving the way for a "new" German drama – the form was borrowed from Strindberg, the cold-blooded "Leidenschaftlichkeit" came from Wedekind, the scorn for bourgeois philistinism from Sternheim. Steiger (24), who also acknowledged Kaiser's indebtedness to Wedekind and Sternheim, thought that the play's structure, the rise and fall of the action, was modelled on Strindberg's *Nach Damaskus*. Steiger, therefore, could not decide whether Kaiser was really an original genius or just a clever eclectic. Richard Elchinger (21)<sup>5 2</sup> was less ambivalent, concluding that Kaiser's play, which, had it been written by a seventeen-year-old, would have been acclaimed as a work of genius, was nothing more than "die geschickte Synthese eines Kundigen". Falckenberg's highly accomplished production was considered one of his best ever achievements and, despite the rowdiness of some of the audience, this performance was described as "ein Ehrenabend der Kammerspiele" (22).

The second theatre to stage *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was the Volksbühne, Vienna, on 27.12.1917 with Max Pallenberg as the Kassierer. Pallenberg's acting was criticised as monotonous and tiresome (26); his relentless ranting, the constant droning of his voice failed to reproduce the subtle nuances of Kaiser's protagonist (25).

-----  
<sup>5 2</sup>Richard Elchinger (1879–1955) was a critic for the most influential Munich newspaper, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*. See Rühle, p. 1163.



The Viennese audience had problems understanding Kaiser's concise, compressed language and vented its frustration by whistling (25). However, according to Felix Salten (26),<sup>53</sup> the play's poetic quality was able to win over the majority of the spectators, whose loud applause managed to drown out the hisses of the discontented.

The third theatre to present *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was the Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. (18.3.1918).<sup>54</sup> The director was Arthur Hellmer who, in a short period of time, staged twelve of Kaiser's plays.<sup>55</sup> Although Richard Dohse (27) recognised the drama's poetic qualities, he thought that it failed to achieve dramatic tension because of its cinematic sequence of scenes. Despite the excellent production, which was carried by Eugen Klöpfer's superb performance in the main role, the public response was at first reserved and then a mixture of agreement and disapproval.

*Von morgens bis mitternachts* was the second of Kaiser's Expressionist plays to be presented in Berlin. It arrived a year after *Die Koralie* and almost two years after its Munich premiere. Both plays were directed at the Deutsches Theater by Felix Hollaender;<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup>Felix Salten was the pseudonym of the writer and Viennese critic Siegmund Salzmann (1869–1945) who acquired international fame with his animal story *Bambi* (1923). See Rühle, p. 1175.

<sup>54</sup>Schürer dates this production as taking place in April 1918, *Erläuterungen*, p. 63.

<sup>55</sup>See Schürer, *Erläuterungen*, p. 63.

<sup>56</sup>Felix Hollaender (1867–1931), an associate of Max Reinhardt's, took charge of Reinhardt's theatres when he left Berlin in 1920 for Vienna. Unable to repeat Reinhardt's





*Die Koralle* opened on 17.1.1918 and *Von morgens bis mitternachts* on 31.1.1919. As in Vienna, Max Pallenberg played the main role of the Kassierer. Emil Faktor (28)<sup>57</sup> wrote that this production represented yet another disaster in Berlin for Georg Kaiser. Whereas the Munich critics had objected to Kaiser's lack of originality, Faktor, while acknowledging the influence of dramatic predecessors (such as the "Sturm und Drang" and Wedekind) on Kaiser, nevertheless concluded that he was basically an innovative writer. For Jacobsohn (33), the strength of the play was its symbolism; the Kassierer's fate was important not as an individual tragedy but only in its broader, symbolical context. The Kassierer's reckless search to buy happiness was representative of the dilemma of an entire period which had turned away from God and which, through its blind materialistic greed, was bringing about its own destruction. What distinguished Kaiser's treatment of his subject-matter was the avoidance of drawn-out pathos, was the furiously breathless pace of events. Like Jacobsohn, Faktor was basically favourable towards Kaiser's text, calling it his liveliest work and admiring its dramatic qualities, its tension and the combination of realism and fantasy.

-----  
<sup>56</sup> (cont'd) successes, Hollaender became a critic for the Berlin *8 Uhr Abendblatt* in 1923. His nephew was the popular composer Friedrich Hollaender. See Rühle, pp. 1166-67.

<sup>57</sup> Emil Faktor (1876-1941) was chief editor for the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* which was progressive culturally. Its contributors included Herbert Ihering and Gustav Landauer. See Rühle, pp. 1163-64.



Faktor and Jacobsohn, as well as other Berlin critics, placed the blame for the failure of *Von morgens bis mitternachts* not on Kaiser's text but on Hollaender's production. Jacobsohn complained that Hollaender failed to present the essence of Kaiser's play – its frantic tempo. The stage performance was a very pale imitation which in no way did justice to Kaiser's original. The pace of the production was so slow that Jacobsohn even wanted to rename this performance "von Ostern bis Pfingsten"!<sup>58</sup> Faktor saw this poor production as the reason for the audience's negative response to a work which did possess artistic merit and felt that the play deserved a much better public reception. Hollaender's production was also criticised for being too realistic, especially in the meetings with "Death" (31, 32). The scene in the snowy field, where the Kassierer is alone with his conscience, is really one of the most Expressionist scenes in the play (the "Telegrammstil"; the symbolism, etc.). Instead of presenting this scene in a visionary, abstract, symbolic manner, Hollaender used a plastic skeleton! His production was too much of a "Spielgemisch" and Pallenberg's acting was too "gegenständlich" (31). Faktor, disappointed by the lack of rhythm in the final Salvation Army scene, thought that this scene, which lacked the touch of a great director, highlighted unfavourably the difference between Reinhardt

---

<sup>58</sup>Max Herrmann-Neisse (32) also criticised the poor, inappropriately slow production. Fritz Engel (29), however, was less critical and considered the tempo of the performance suitable for the play.





and his less talented associate, Hollaender. This production caused a public scandal (30). The performance was accompanied by hissing, shouting and whistling on door-keys (29); arguments and scuffles broke out in the audience (30). Referring to this rowdiness, Fritz Engel (29) remarked ironically: "Das ganze nennt man Kunstgenuss."

The most negative critic was Alfred Kerr (34).<sup>5</sup> A staunch supporter of Naturalism, he made little attempt to understand what Kaiser was trying to achieve. He seemed to approach a new work and a new movement, not with an open mind and an inquisitive attitude, but with firm prejudices. His criticism was highly subjective and not always fair. With regard to Kerr's treatment of Georg Kaiser, it is impossible to agree with Rühle's remark: "So war er [Kerr] offen für alles, was schöpferische Originalität verhiess (blieb aber verschlossen gegen den frühen Brecht)."<sup>6</sup> Indeed, critics nowadays are at times too generous in their assessment of Kerr's egotistical outpourings — Jürgen Behrens describes Kerr as "zumeist mit unübertrefflichem Instinkt das Richtige treffend"<sup>7</sup> and Rühle writes: "so

-----  
<sup>5</sup> Alfred Kerr (1867–1948), who wrote for the *Tag* (Berlin) and, from 1919–33, for the *Berliner Tageblatt*, is described by Rühle as "die meistbewunderte und meistgehasste Erscheinung unter den deutschen Kritikern. Eigenwillig, temperamentvoll, energisch, eitel [...], voll Ironie und Sarkasmus (auch gegen sich selbst): so war und spielte er dreissig Jahre lang den 'Star' unter den Kritikern" (p. 1170). Schürer says that Kerr was "ein erbitterter Gegner Iherings und liess dessen Schützlinge wie Kaiser und Brecht nicht gelten" (*Erläuterungen*, p. 69).

<sup>6</sup> Rühle, p. 1171.

<sup>7</sup> "Nachwort" to Alfred Kerr, *Theaterkritiken*, ed. J. Behrens (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1971), p. 172.



gründlich war die literarisch-dramaturgische Analyse der Stücke, so sicher waren im ganzen seine Wertungen".<sup>62</sup> One feels, however, that Kerr's instincts were wrong concerning Kaiser; his review of *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was anything but analytical. It was a mixture of subjective impressions and cheap jokes which tried to be witty at Kaiser's expense. At times, Kerr is amusing but his reviews reveal very little about a work or a production, telling us more about Kerr himself. As a result, it is difficult to take his reviews seriously and to regard them as valid criticism of Kaiser. Kerr attacked Kaiser's play as the contrived, pretentious product of a writer lacking depth, imagination and poetic inspiration. The only scene which Kerr liked, because of a moment of empathy, was the scene with the waiter in Part II, but he even criticised this scene for taking place behind the Kassierer's back. After being moved by *Von morgens bis mitternachts* to the point of "poetry", Kerr ended his review with the highly sophisticated, extremely profound conclusion: "Das Ganze wirkt [...] wie eine toll aussehende Wurstpelle mit keiner Wurst."

In Königsberg (1920), *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was considered a rather hybrid play, consisting of a peculiar mixture of Expressionist and Naturalist elements (35). Although Richard Rosenheim, the director, tried to maintain a balance between these opposing styles, his production

---

<sup>62</sup>Rühle, p. 1171.





tended more towards realism (35). He approached Kaiser as though he were Ibsen, toning down the Expressionist features and making the automaton-like characters more human (37)'. Unfortunately, this attempt at a stylistic compromise was not always successful – Hans Wyneken (35) complained of "Stilwidrigkeiten" (as in the family scene in Part II). The Salvation Army and the race scenes were considered the most effective (35, 36). Kaiser's message that money cannot buy happiness was not able to convince Ludwig Goldstein (36). After the scandal in Berlin and the cautious reception in London, where Kaiser's name was considered rather "ominous", the Königsberg critics were proud that, here in the provinces, the public were able to accept, with dignity, the innovations of *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, without being blind to the play's weaknesses (36).

Two years after Hollaender's disastrous production at the Deutsches Theater, *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was again staged in Berlin, this time by Viktor Barnowsky at the Lessing-Theater (14.4.1921). Alexander Granach starred in the role of the Kassierer and the sets were designed by César Klein. Ihering (39) considered this, with some reservations, Kaiser's best play and, although he thought that Barnowsky's production lacked "Besessenheit und Phantasie", he nevertheless regarded Barnowsky's staging of *Von morgens bis mitternachts* as a great step forward from Hollaender's unsuccessful, over-Naturalistic presentation. Jacobsohn (40), this time, blamed the stage-hands for





slowing down the pace of the production. The critics were favourably impressed by Alexander Granach, a newcomer to Berlin from Munich. For Ihering, the talented Granach revealed both the advantages and disadvantages of Expressionist acting. The main danger was that his performance was often "heftig" instead of "glühend"; however, his ability to give shape to inner reality highlighted the possibilities of the Expressionist style. This time, unlike 1919, there were no outbursts of public indignation. Hans Knudsen (38) reported that, despite Kaiser's recent trial, at which he was sentenced on 15.2.1921 to one year's imprisonment for embezzlement, and despite his behaviour at the trial, which many considered arrogant and boastful, there was no scandal.

Dr. Karl Irmeler (41),<sup>63</sup> at the first production of *Von morgens bis mitternachts* in Dortmund, thought that the play's complete lack of plausibility and poetic warmth did nothing to substantiate Kaiser's immodest remarks that his recent arrest and imprisonment were a national disaster. The Kassierer's excuses did not justify in any way his criminal behaviour and the play's ending undermined all sense of duty and responsibility. Even as late as 1922, with Expressionism and Kaiser long established, there were still those in the public who were unprepared to accept the new movement because of their old-fashioned Classical notions. In

-----  
<sup>63</sup>Although Irmeler's review is not dated, the references to Kaiser's trial would imply a production during the early 1920's.



Hannover, however, as Johann Frerking wrote, those who were more progressive in their attitude towards modern drama were in the majority:

In den Rängen versuchten während des zweiten Teils und am Schluss ein paar Unbelehrte, Unbelehrbare ihren fossilen Vorstellungen vom 'Guten, Schönen, Wahren' und ihrer Abgeneigtheit gegen geistige Anstrengungen durch Zischen und Pfeifen Geltung zu verschaffen. Der Beifall des Hauses überscholl die Albernheit.<sup>64</sup>

By 1924, *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was starting to be dismissed as out of date. Fritz Mack (42) complained that the Leipzig Schauspielhaus production was much too late as Expressionism was now almost out of fashion. He considered the play, with its mixture of styles, a prime example of the inadequacies of Expressionist techniques and praised instead what he saw as its Naturalist scenes. As in Königsberg, Kaiser's disregard for money was also unconvincing in Leipzig: "das Publikum dieser kapitalsknappen Zeit glaubt nicht an Kaisers leidenschaftlich-spitzfindige These, dass für rund 60 000 Mark so gar nichts zu haben ist..."<sup>65</sup> For Mack, the highlight of this production was the Salvation Army scene.

When *Von morgens bis mitternachts* returned to Berlin in 1925, in a production at the Schillertheater, directed by Albrecht Joseph, the play and especially its language were condemned as completely out-of-date (46). Jacobsohn (43) still wondered why none of the productions had been able to

-----  
<sup>64</sup>Johann Frerking, 11.3.1922, *Augenblicke des Theaters*, ed. H. Rischbieter (Velber: Friedrich, 1963), p. 45.

<sup>65</sup>Hans Natonek, *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, 6.10.1924.





present the play at an appropriately furious pace. He thought that it contained too many realistic elements, which, especially now that Expressionism was falling out of fashion, the directors and actors could not refrain from filling out in the Naturalist style. Once more, the usual objections were raised. Kaiser's play was criticised as a mere "Ideenspiel", which failed because of its cold dialectics and its over-abstract "characters", lacking in human feelings (47). Kaiser's attacks on materialism and the Salvation Army were so superficial that they could not be justified (45). The Kassierer's suicide brought the play to a rather weak and cheap conclusion (45). Alexander Granach, who again played the Kassierer, was, by now, well established as a performer of Kaiser's parts (46). Joseph's uneven production was attacked for accentuating the work's contradictions (its mixture of Naturalism and Expressionism) (44). *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was also not considered the best choice for a "Volksbühne" like the Schillertheater (44). Jacobsohn saw the "Kleinbürger" in the audience as being unable to relate to the work's content because they were too respectable to commit embezzlement and too unromantic to come to terms with the Salvation Army scene. Consequently, the usually well-behaved audience responded with hisses of dissent (43, 44, 46). Thus, as in 1919 and despite two previous Berlin productions, *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was, in 1925, still controversial enough to stir up an audience (47).



## *Die Koralie*

The third major Expressionist drama by Kaiser to be premiered in 1917 was *Die Koralie*, the first part of what later became known as the *Gas*-trilogy (*Die Koralie*, *Gas I*, *Gas II*). This play, the sixth Kaiser premiere of the year, opened on 27.10.1917 at the Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. (directed by Arthur Hellmer) and at the Kammerspiele, Munich (directed by Otto Falckenberg). Unlike *Die Bürger von Calais* and *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, *Die Koralie* was a new work, which had been written in 1916–17 and published in 1917 (Berlin: S. Fischer). It was translated into English in 1929.

Richard Dohse (50), at the Frankfurt premiere, saw *Die Koralie* as opening up a new direction in German drama. For Kasimir Edschmid (49), this production marked Kaiser's complete break with literary tradition and his affirmation of the new drama, of uncompromising Expressionism. Edschmid, whose praise was rapturous, especially appreciated the play's Expressionist features – e.g. its mixture of realism, symbolism and fairy-tale. He considered *Die Koralie* a work of extreme beauty, extolling the depth of its ideas, its poetic vigour and its powerful language. The last act was great because it proved how effective Kaiser could be dramatically when he rejected external reality, the milieu and tendentiousness of realism and Naturalism and instead presented inner reality, the force of ideas. Edschmid was a rare critic amongst Kaiser's contemporaries because he did





not approach Expressionism with the traditional literary criteria, which many of his colleagues applied to Kaiser, often to Kaiser's detriment. Therefore, he was able to appreciate the importance of the new Expressionist movement, not with hindsight at a comfortable distance, but as it actually happened amidst all the diversity of styles and of literary quality of the works published during the period, in which he lived. Another critic in Frankfurt (51) praised the marvellous lyrical language of the play's ending, the tension of the exposition (Act I) and considered the fourth act the highpoint of the evening; he thought that *Die Koralie* grew in quality, the more the social elements of the early parts were relegated to the background. Dohse, although he complained that the clarity sometimes suffered because of the complexity of the work's ideas, nevertheless admired its language and its structure and also acknowledged Kaiser's poetic ability.

Bernhard Diebold (48)“ did not agree with these critics about the play's ending. He was pleased with what he saw up to the Milliardär's shooting of the Sekretär in the third act. From then on, the play deteriorated, there was a loss of clarity. Unable to accept the Expressionist concern with inner reality, he remarked that the Naturalists would

-----  
 “Bernhard Diebold (1886–1945), who was considered the most important critic outside Berlin, was from 1917–33 the leading critic for the "bürgerlich-demokratische" *Frankfurter Zeitung*. He was the author of *Anarchie im Drama* (Frankfurt/M.: Frankfurter Verlags-Anstalt, 1921) and *Der Denkspieler Georg Kaiser* (Frankfurt/M.: Frankfurter Verlags-Anstalt, 1924). See Rühle, p. 1162.





only have presented the social problems and would have concluded *Die Koralie* with the third act. Diebold, disliking the way *Die Koralie* now degenerated from the treatment of powerful social themes to a preoccupation with the Milliardär's private psychological problems, rejected the romanticism and social escapism of the ending. Büsching (52), although he praised the clarity and power of the opening acts of what he thought would be a "Menschheitsdrama", was also disappointed by the dreaminess and symbolism of the outcome. Diebold found the play's symbolism and the figure of the Sekretär ambiguous and unclear. Yet, despite such criticism, despite his criticism of the weak second and fifth acts, he was particularly impressed by Kaiser's beautifully poetic language. Indeed, Kaiser's linguistic splendour was able to assuage Diebold's critical objections.<sup>67</sup>

This premiere was warmly received by the Frankfurt audience and was considered a great success for Kaiser (48, 49, 50). Eugen Klöpfer, in the leading role of the Milliardär, was especially effective (48). The basically positive reception of *Die Koralie* by Kaiser's contemporaries in Frankfurt (the public acclaim and the generally favourable critical comments) is interesting from a modern perspective. Nowadays, of the plays in the *Gas*-trilogy, *Die Koralie* seems the least satisfactory because of its

-----  
<sup>67</sup>While reviewing the premiere of *Gas I* in Frankfurt (28.11.1918), Diebold refers again to *Die Koralie*. See review no. 67.



over-emphasis on the figure of the *Milliardär*, whose psychological developments are not especially convincing. Also, stylistically and thematically, it does not appear as significant for the development of Expressionism as *Gas I* and *II*. Yet, in its historical context, *Die Koralie* was far more important than it might appear today because it seemed to confirm to Kaiser's critics in 1917 his total commitment to Expressionism and the new drama. For Dohse, this Frankfurt success was all the greater because, despite the difficulties involved, Kaiser's innovative play was opening up new areas of dramatic exploration.

At the Munich *Kammerspiele*, Otto Falckenberg opened his cycle of modern dramas "Das jüngste Deutschland", which included Hermann Essig's *Die Glückskuh*, Otto Zoff's *Kerker und Erlösung* (Uraufführung), Carl Sternheim's *Perleberg* and Paul Kornfeld's *Die Verführung*, with the Uraufführung of Kaiser's *Die Koralie*.<sup>68</sup> At this Munich premiere, Edgar Steiger (53), although he was dissatisfied by the poor psychological motivation of the characters, still saw Kaiser's play as a deeper reflection of life than the techniques of the Naturalists. Richard Elchinger (54), who criticised the unexpected, abrupt changes in the behaviour of the *Milliardär* and his son, thought that Kaiser was capable of writing something better. As in Frankfurt, the

<sup>68</sup>See W. Petzet, *Theater – Die Münchner Kammerspiele 1911–72*, pp. 125–26. Huder fails to list this Munich Uraufführung, only listing the Frankfurt premiere – Kaiser, *Werke*, VI, 871. Schürer, too, only lists the Frankfurt premiere, *Kaiser*, p. 14. However, Kenworthy (p. 202) and Rühle (p. 79) list both premieres.





public applauded the performance warmly (54).

*Die Koralie* was the first of Kaiser's Expressionist plays to be presented in Berlin. It was produced by Felix Hollaender at the Kammerspiele des Deutschen Theaters (17.1.1918) less than three months after its provincial premiere in Frankfurt and Munich (27.10.1917). Friedrich Düsel (58) was glad that a major Kaiser play, even though it had already been premiered in the provinces, was at last being staged in Berlin because up to then the Berlin theatres had been ignoring Kaiser and had produced only *Die Sorina*, a peripheral, insignificant work (at the Lessing-Theater, 6.3.1917). Once again, an Expressionist work by Kaiser seemed unpatriotic.<sup>69</sup> Karl Strecker (59) was disturbed by the preoccupation with sensational crimes in recent German literature and by the rising popularity of detective stories and "Schauerfilms". He thought that contemporary writers were afraid of losing their public to the cinema and, therefore, in order to prevent this, were trying to surpass the commercial films with regard to cheap sensationalism. Georg Kaiser, who in *Von morgens bis mitternachts* had placed the theft of 60,000 marks at the centre of the action and whose *Koralie* presented a murder, could not be exempted from this trend. Strecker wanted an end to this debasement of literature – this sensationalism was too "undeutsch". He asked despairingly whether this "Revolverdramatik" was really the highpoint of German

---

<sup>69</sup>Cf. Herwig's review (6) of *Die Bürger von Calais*.



culture and contemporary German literature.

Kaiser's plot left some of the Berlin critics unconvinced. Alfred Kerr (57) could not understand the motives for the Milliardär's murder of the Sekretär and thought it implausible that the son and daughter were unable to distinguish between their father and his secretary. Düsel, too, did not believe that the Milliardär and the Sekretär could have so similar an appearance that they could fool the Milliardär's own children. Düsel, who expected the Milliardär to be plagued with guilt after the murder, could not reconcile the Milliardär's final serenity and lack of conscience with his own sense of bourgeois morality. Kaiser's abstract, schematic "characters" were criticised as lacking in feeling and as existing in too rarefied an atmosphere (58); his language lacked life because it was not individualised and was too concise (59); his symbolism was considered too obscure and complex (61).<sup>70</sup> At least there were some critics like Jacobsohn (55) who realised that *Die Koralie* could not be judged by the laws of logic or by normal realistic criteria. Düsel, although he acknowledged that works of the imagination should not be judged pedantically according to the doctrines of logic and probability, still did not find Kaiser's work acceptable, even on its own terms. For Jacobsohn, the highlight of the play was the extremely moving, melancholy language of the

-----  
<sup>70</sup>Cf. Diebold (48). In contrast, Willi Handl (63) was a rare critic in that he found Kaiser's symbolism in *Die Koralie* "schreiend deutlich".



Milliardär in the fifth act.

Because of its complexity and stylistic ambiguity, *Die Koralie* was considered such a difficult play to produce that even a Reinhardt would have been seriously extended (55). As Hollaender was not the most capable of directors, this Berlin production was far from satisfactory. Although an impressive cast had been assembled, with Paul Wegener as the Milliardär, Werner Krauss as Der Herr in Grau and Ernst Deutsch as the Sohn, Jacobsohn was unhappy with Hollaender's distribution of the various parts. He found Else Eckersberg totally inappropriate as the Tochter and Wegener, Deutsch and Eckersberg did not seem plausible as members of the same family. The improbability of the action was increased also by the fact that Wegener and Bernhard Goetzke (Sekretär), who were supposed to be identical doubles, did not look or sound at all alike (56, 61). The acting represented a mixture of styles. Wegener tended to go against Kaiser's intentions by presenting his role realistically in the traditional manner, fleshing out as a real living human being Kaiser's skeletal protagonist – to good theatrical effect (58, 59, 63). Closer to the Expressionist style of acting was Werner Krauss, who emphasized the unrealistic, grotesque, visionary aspects of his role (59, 63). The public response was a mixture of bewilderment and silence. At the end, there was only some slight applause (60, 61).<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup>Strecker (59) and Handl (63) were more generous in their appraisal of the audience's reaction. Despite the objections of many spectators, Handl even thought that the play was a success.





For Fritz Engel (62), Hollaender's production could have been more unrealistic. Seeing Kaiser's play as a mixture of reality and illusion, he could imagine a performance much closer to a "Schattenspiel". Hermann Kienzl (60)<sup>72</sup> blamed the failure of *Die Koralie* in Berlin on the inappropriate style of Hollaender's production.<sup>73</sup>

1918 also saw a production of *Die Koralie* at the Volksbühne in Vienna with Fritz Kortner as the Milliardär. Polgar<sup>74</sup> had some praise for the work despite the fact that it was an Expressionist drama. He did not consider it a good example of Expressionism because it was not boring and humourless enough! Instead, it even managed in places to be powerful and entertaining. Polgar thought that Kaiser should not take himself too seriously and that his true vocation would be as a writer of farce. He was sceptical of Kaiser's sincerity with regard to the social themes and other problems in his plays and believed that Kaiser chose themes, to which he was really indifferent, not from a sense of commitment but merely because of their theatrical effectiveness. The Viennese public, not over-awed by *Die Koralie*, gave it a cool reception.

At the Hamburg Kammerspiele, *Die Koralie* was presented

-----  
<sup>72</sup>Hermann Kienzl (1865-1928) was a critic for the *Steglitzer Anzeiger*. He also contributed to the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, the *Dresdener Anzeiger*, the *Bremer Nachrichten*, the *Düsseldorf Mittag*, the *Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt* and the *Hannoverscher Anzeiger*. See Rühle, p. 1171.

<sup>73</sup>Julius Knopf (61) was less critical and considered the style of Hollaender's production appropriate to the original text.



by Erich Ziegel, with Kaiser's agreement,<sup>74</sup> in four acts (1920). Dr. Malte Wagner was displeased because Ziegel, in trying to emphasize the play's social and ethical content, had cut the fourth act (where the *Milliardär* is examined by the magistrates), which Wagner considered the theatrically most effective act, and had extended, to the play's detriment, the already weak second act with its contrast between the worlds of high society and the oppressed stokers.<sup>75</sup> The critic for the *Hamburger Correspondent*<sup>76</sup> thought that the ease with which the fourth act had been omitted was a sign of the drama's poor construction and could see no justification for the claims of those critics who liked to describe Kaiser as the "Sudermann des Expressionismus". At least Sudermann's dramas were able to maintain the audience's interest and keep them in suspense right through to the end. By presenting bare sets, Johannes Schröder tried to eliminate everything from the stage design which might distract the audience from concentrating on the play's language and intellectual content. However, Wagner thought that the extremely sparse sets only contributed to the ineffectiveness of this Hamburg production. Again the usual objections were raised: Kaiser's language was denounced as "Papierdeutsch",<sup>77</sup> the murder was unconvincing

<sup>74</sup>H. W. F. [H. W. Fischer], *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 5.1.1920, in *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 3, p. 57.

<sup>75</sup>Dr. Malte Wagner, *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 5.1.1920, in *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 3, p. 55.

<sup>76</sup>C. M.-R., *Hamburger Correspondent*, 5.1.1920, in *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 3, p. 56.

<sup>77</sup>C. M.-R., *Hamburger Correspondent*, 5.1.1920.





and the play was dismissed as "die äusserst geschickte Konstruktion eines durch Kino und Carl Sternheim gleicherweise verbildeten Literaten".<sup>78</sup>

When *Die Koralie* was presented at the Neues Schauspielhaus in Königsberg, it was directed by Georg Kaiser himself.<sup>79</sup> This production was well received by the public (65). The theatre came to Kaiser's aid most effectively with Expressionist sets. Unfortunately, however, Kaiser was unable to achieve a unified style and to work miracles with the actors, most of whom appeared "zu wesenhaft, zu wirklichkeitsnah". Perhaps this is some consolation for all those other directors who had problems presenting the new style of Expressionist drama and Expressionist acting consistently and successfully on the stage and who, too frequently, slipped out of style towards a more conventional realism or Naturalism.

### *Gas I*

*Gas I* represented another newly written Expressionist play (1917-18). Published in 1918 (Berlin: S. Fischer), it was premiered in the same year at both the Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. and the Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf (28.11.1918). This was the last of seven plays to be premiered for Kaiser in 1918. The play's main feature was its striking topicality. The title evokes memories of the

<sup>78</sup>Wagner, *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 5.1.1920.

<sup>79</sup>I have no date for this production.



poison-gas used in the First World War and the strike is reminiscent of the strikes in the German armaments' factories in 1917 and 1918.<sup>80</sup> Just as the workers in the drama, after the explosion, have to decide which direction their future should take, Germany, too, was at the crossroads politically and economically. After the devastation of the First World War, a fresh start had to be made and there were hopes of a better future. *Gas I*, therefore, reflected in many ways the social situation of Kaiser's contemporaries: "Wie in keinem anderen Stück näherte sich Kaiser hier sozialen Gegenwartsproblemen und vor allem: Gegenwartshoffnungen."<sup>81</sup> The drama was produced all over Germany and helped make Kaiser's name known abroad. It was premiered at the Theater des Pavel Svanda, Prague (7.10.1919); at the Haus des Sowjets Pechati, Moscow (1922); at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, England (24.11.1923) and in Tokyo at the Sho Gekidjo (1926). Translations were made into Czech (1919), into French (1921), Russian (1922), English (1923), Swedish (1925) and Japanese (1926).

Once again, on 28.11.1918, Arthur Hellmer directed the premiere of a major Kaiser play at the Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. The reviewer for the Frankfurt *Kleine Presse* (69) considered the social themes of *Gas I* particularly

---

<sup>80</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, pp. 105-06.

<sup>81</sup>Rühle, p. 124. Cf. Oskar Maurus Fontana's 1921 review of *Gas I* in Vienna: "Auch Georg Kaisers Schauspiel *Gas* steckt voll Gegenwart. Das ist seine Stärke. Unsere Zusammenbrüche, unsere Sehnsüchte sind in ihm. Das Chaos dieser Gasmenschheit mit seinen etwas trüben und nebelhaften Hoffnungen ist das Chaos jeder Krisenzeit, ist unser Chaos" (*Die neue Schaubühne*, 3, Nos. 2/3, Feb. 1921, 63).



topical. However, Kaiser's basic antithesis, the antithesis between industrialism and agricultural collectivism, did not seem a realistic alternative and seemed to by-pass the conflicts of real life. The Frankfurt public were not convinced by the Milliardärsohn's desire for a return to nature because this idea sounded too vague and poetic, because it seemed implausible and impractical. More in tune with the socialism and republicanism of the times would have been an attempt to harmonise the ideas of work and agricultural collectivism rather than to present a false set of alternatives (69). Dohse (68), who also thought that the views expressed in the play had no basis in reality, called them utopian. Diebold (66, 67), before tackling *Gas I*, first could not resist the opportunity to criticise once more the ending of *Die Koralle*, complaining that the social themes of the opening acts had been abandoned in favour of social escapism, romantic quietism and lyricism and that Karl Marx had given way to Schopenhauer. However, he found the ending of *Gas I*, the daughter's promise to give birth to the "Neuer Mensch", almost as weak and unsatisfactory as the ending of *Die Koralle* (66). Diebold was especially disappointed by this vague posturing, by what seemed to be illusory future hopes (67). What he wanted was to actually see this "Neuer Mensch" as a living force in the present and he called on Kaiser to present this "Neuer Mensch" in a new third part of *Die Koralle* (67).





The reactions of the Frankfurt critics to *Gas I* varied greatly. Dohse would have liked to retain his faith in Kaiser's poetic mission but he was worried by Kaiser's tendency to be over-contrived. Diebold thought that the characters were too artificial and that Kaiser was not capable of presenting really true individuals (66). For the critic from the *Frankfurter Nachrichten* (70), who was disappointed by *Gas I* as a continuation of *Die Koralie*, Kaiser's theatricality was a sham. It was not the dramatist's job to present simplistic ideas chaotically but to reduce life's chaos to clear, simple formulae. The ethical values propagated by Kaiser were now hollow and unacceptable, his works had become mere examples of soulless intellectualism. In contrast, the critic for the Frankfurt *Kleine Presse* saw this production as restoring his faith in Kaiser's dramatic ability, especially after the recent premiere (21.10.1918) in Frankfurt of the three one-act plays *Claudius*, *Friedrich und Anna* and *Juana*. Diebold was impressed by the topicality and dialectical formulation of Kaiser's themes, the visual effectiveness of his symbolical settings and colour symbolism, the pregnant concentration of his main themes into one dominant symbol (the piece of coral; gas) (66) and by his language (67).

Hellmer's production was considered adequate, although the cast were only average and Franz Ebert, as the *Milliardärsohn*, lacked intensity (67). Robert Reppach's sets, especially the hall for the mass scene in Act IV, were



effective (69, 70). Despite their varying opinions on the merits of *Gas I*, the critics did, at least, agree that the production was a success with the Frankfurt public (68, 70). For the critic from the *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, who had thoroughly disliked the drama, the loud applause was earned by Hellmer's fine production, not by Kaiser's text. Diebold (67) thought that the play was well received by its audience because of its enormous topicality.

The premiere of *Gas I* at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus (28.11.1918) was directed by Gustav Lindemann; Louise Dumont, the co-founder of the Schauspielhaus, gave a moving performance as the Mutter (73). According to Linke, they had probably become interested in Georg Kaiser through Gustav Landauer, who had also aroused Hellmer's interest in *Die Bürger von Calais* (premiered by Hellmer in 1917).<sup>82</sup> There were opposing reactions to Kaiser's text from the local critics. Heinz Stolz (72), who compared *Gas I* unfavourably to Hans W. Fischer's *Motor*, denounced the work for being contrived and soulless. He disliked Kaiser's "Zeitschriftendeutsch", which was the complete opposite of everyday language, the depersonalised "characters" and the stylistic confusion of the action. In contrast, Joseph Stritzko (73) praised the poetic greatness of this work, which depicted the injustice and inhumanity of a social system still in existence, and the simple grandeur of the

---

<sup>82</sup> "Den entscheidenden Hinweis auf Georg Kaiser dankten Louise Dumont und Gustav Lindemann wohl ihrem Freund und zeitweiligen Dramaturgen Gustav Landauer, der sich sehr für diesen Autor eingesetzt hat" (Linke, pp. 216-17, note 2).





daughter's final words.

The critics admired greatly Lindemann's superb production. Knut Ström's sets were a mixture of symbolism and realism (74). The factory (Act I) and the hall (Act IV) were presented realistically; the explosion was especially impressive and was considered a technical masterpiece (71, 74). The fourth act was described as the highpoint of the production.<sup>83</sup> In order to emphasize the excitement of the workers in this act, Lindemann eliminated the tribunal from which they speak in the original text. Instead, they climbed onto the scaffolding when they wanted to address their colleagues (71).<sup>84</sup> In addition, to increase the effectiveness of this mass scene, the entire ensemble, not extras, were used.<sup>85</sup> Lindemann made the masses more dynamic by dividing the chorus into "Stimmgruppen" and thus achieving "eine sprachliche Differenzierung der Masse".<sup>86</sup> The Milliardärsohn's address to the workers in this act was cut in order to eliminate repetition and verbosity.<sup>87</sup>

Lindemann did not try to flesh out the characters but tried to accentuate the play's ideas and conflicts. The acting style, therefore, was a mixture of fantasy and realism (72, 74). Peter Esser, as the Milliardärsohn, did not attempt to create a character of flesh and blood but to present an outline, concentrating on "die Idee" (71, 72).

-----  
<sup>83</sup> Linke, p. 111.

<sup>84</sup> See Linke, p. 111.

<sup>85</sup> See Linke, p. 111 and p. 217, note 20.

<sup>86</sup> Linke, p. 110.

<sup>87</sup> Linke, p. 111.



The audience received this production, which was performed ten times in Düsseldorf, with loud applause (72); Mai (71)<sup>88</sup> attributed the success, to a large extent, to Lindemann's accomplished production.

*Gas I* was the third of Kaiser's Expressionist dramas to be presented in Berlin – after Hollaender's productions of *Die Koralle* (17.1.1918) and *Von morgens bis mitternachts* (31.1.1919) at the Deutsches Theater. This time the director was Dr. Paul Legband, who staged *Gas I* at the Volksbühne (25.2.1919) with Ernst Stahl-Nachbaur as the Milliardärsohn. Just as in the 1890's Gerhart Hauptmann and until recently August Strindberg had been in vogue, now Kaiser was in great demand, his plays seemed to reflect the mood of the times and even the Berlin theatres, which up to now had been rather slow in their appreciation of Kaiser, were clamouring to produce his works (79). This Volksbühne production represented Kaiser's first great success in Berlin (75).<sup>89</sup> He had achieved that rare combination so often needed for a breakthrough – the right play at the right time before the right audience. What made the difference was that, this time, Kaiser's new Expressionist drama was performed not before the well-to-do bourgeois audience at the Deutsches Theater but before the public of a "Volksbühne". As a

-----  
<sup>88</sup>Rühle dates this review 29.11.1919, p. 127

<sup>89</sup>Cecil W. Davies writes of *Gas I*: "it was the Volksbühne production that brought Kaiser the public recognition in Berlin which he had long sought for" (*Theatre for the people. The story of the Volksbühne* [Austin: University of Texas, 1977], p. 92). Likewise, Rühle says that this production "brachte den von Kaiser lange gesuchten Publikumserfolg in Berlin" (p. 124).



result, there was an unusual rapport between the play and its spectators, who were able to relate very easily to the social problems facing Kaiser's workers (75). Jacobsohn (8) thought that the play was successful because its topical, socially relevant themes more than compensated for its fashionable Expressionist tendencies. For Ihering (9), Kaiser's public reception in Berlin was puzzling – it seemed strange that a dramatist like Kaiser should be rejected by the more high-class theatre-goers and yet be acclaimed by the audience of the Volksbühne.

Although Ihering (76) agreed with Jacobsohn that Kaiser's themes were topical, he thought that Kaiser did not develop or deepen these but only presented them in a superficial, sensational manner. While acknowledging Kaiser's technical ability, Ihering had some fundamental doubts about *Gas I*. The characters did not seem totally consistent; Kaiser did not appear capable of developing the characters and events fully to a perfectly logical and convincing conclusion. Instead, as a result of this inability, the ending was particularly weak. It was embarrassing to have such an ending which was absolutely inconsistent with what had gone on before. The forced optimism of the daughter's promise was too contrived and unsatisfactory. Only in *Von morgens bis mitternachts* had Kaiser been able to write a play to the end with complete consistency. Jacobsohn (75) also found the ending artificial and was sceptical of Kaiser's sincerity in advocating a





return to nature. Kerr (77), as usual, was highly critical of Kaiser. Most of all, he disliked the mass scene in Act IV, objecting to its lack of intellectual content. Instead of developing the arguments through a carefully intensified debate, Kaiser just presented the same ideas again and again. This constant repetition was too simplistic ("Arenenkitsch"). Surprisingly, however, Kerr did manage to muster some praise for Kaiser's language. He thought that Kaiser's major achievement was in transferring the language of Expressionist poetry to the stage. Although he was disappointed by the ending and would have liked Kaiser to present a more convincing answer to society's problems, Jacobsohn still considered Kaiser's experiments far more stimulating than the works of most of his contemporaries since Kaiser at least dealt with social reality.

Ihering praised Legband's production because, for the first time in Berlin, the attempt was made to present one of Kaiser's Expressionist plays on its own terms, as an Expressionist drama.<sup>90</sup> However, the final result was not totally consistent with Legband's noble intentions. Jacobsohn, while acknowledging Legband's attempts at a stylised, non-Naturalistic production, nevertheless had to admit that the difficulties involved in a completely Expressionist production resulted, at times, in a loss of style. The actors, who had problems coping with Kaiser's Expressionist language, on occasion, against the director's

---

<sup>90</sup>There is a photograph of this production in Steffens, p. 129.



intentions, slipped out of style. Ihering also had to admit that the Expressionist style of acting was especially demanding and that those actors had difficulties who lacked intensity or who were undisciplined in their speech and gestures. For Ihering, even Stahl-Nachbaur in the main role, who stood out from the other actors, suffered a loss of intensity, was too repetitious and was psychologically unconvincing. Friedrich Düsel (79) was grateful that Legband's production did not go to the full extremes of Expressionism. As a result, the stage production managed to alleviate the coldness of Kaiser's text. He described the mass scene in Act IV, with its powerful, dynamic presentation of an entire social class and economic period, as the highpoint of the play and the production. Hans Knudsen (78) considered this production far superior to the two previous Kaiser productions in Berlin.

In 1919 and 1920, *Gas I* was produced all over Germany. In 1919, *Gas I* could be seen at the Schauspielhaus, Leipzig, at the Städtische Schauspiele, Baden-Baden, at the Reussisches Landestheater, Gera, at the Stadttheater, Barmen, at the Schauspielhaus, Hannover, at the Schauspielhaus, Munich, at the Deutsches Theater, Stuttgart, at the Deutsches Nationaltheater, Weimar, at the Schauspielhaus, Graz and in Halberstadt and Karlsruhe. In 1920, there were productions at the Kammerspiele, Hamburg, at the Schauspielhaus, Dresden, at the Stadttheater, Augsburg, at the Stadttheater, Freiburg i. B., at the





Hessisches Landestheater, Darmstadt, at the Stadttheater, Dortmund and at the Deutsches Volkstheater, Vienna.

Omankowski, writing in 1922, considered *Gas I* Kaiser's most successful play:

Von allen seinen Bühnenwerken hat Kaisers *Gas* bisher die stärkste Wirkung gehabt, und es gibt kaum ein namhaftes Theater in Deutschland, das dieses Stück noch nicht aufgeführt hat. Einmal ist es der unverkennbare starke theatralische Schwung, der dem Werk eine grosse äussere Wirkung sichert; dann aber vor allem die brennenden Dinge der Gegenwart, die hier zur Verhandlung kommen.''

Provincial audiences, spoiled by cosy productions of traditional works, were not always able to cope with Kaiser's demanding avantgarde Expressionist techniques. His language, "characters", ideas and dramatic form all caused problems for conservative, bourgeois theatregoers. In Karlsruhe (1919), the public were unable to relate to Kaiser's play because they approached his characters in the traditional manner. Since they desired empathy and catharsis, they were unsettled at not being able to identify with Kaiser's abstract "characters" (83). The aesthetic tastes of the spectators in Graz (1919) were also not quite attuned to Kaiser's modernism (91). *Gas I* left them "ratlos"; they seemed alienated by its pessimistic rejection of the present, by the death of the splendid army officer and by the threatening presence of the angry working-class masses on the stage. What is surprising is that *Gas I*, which is not the most problematic of Kaiser's Expressionist plays,

-----  
' 'W. Omankowski, *Georg Kaiser und seine besten Bühnenwerke* (Berlin: Schneider, 1922), pp. 64-65.



should cause such discomfort and bewilderment for a provincial audience. Indeed, the play is not nearly as radically Expressionist as *Hölle Weg Erde* or *Gas II* and Kaiser was not the most uncompromisingly avantgarde of the Expressionist writers. Dr. Bruno Ertler (91) wondered how the Graz public would have reacted to Kaiser's Expressionist colleagues Barlach and Kokoschka, who, in contrast to Kaiser, were truly radical! In fact, other provincial critics considered Kaiser, in comparison to his more extreme Expressionist colleagues, a particularly moderate representative of that movement (96). In Leipzig (1919), Robert Ludwig, for whom Kaiser was "der erfreuliche Gegenpol zu den vielen Nur-Dichterischen, Nur-Ausdrücklern, d. h. Undramatischen unter unseren Jüngsten", was pleased by *Gas I*. He even had an ideal vision of the ultimate Expressionist playwright and suggested: "Eine Synthese von Georg Kaiser und etwa Ernst Barlach ergäbe den vollendeten Dramatiker unserer Generation."<sup>2</sup>

The provincial theatres attempted to stage Kaiser's *Gas I* in a variety of ways, sometimes very successfully, sometimes disastrously. Actors, not used to Expressionist diction, had problems with Kaiser's language:

[...] seine Sprache hat etwas Explosives. Er zerstört gelegentlich den Sprachbau. Satztrümmer liegen umher, er schleudert Wortblöcke hin, an denen sich die Gewohnheit des Schauspielers und des Zuhörers stösst."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Robert Ludwig, *Die neue Schaubühne*, 1, No. 7 (1.7.1919), 225.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Alfred Möller, *Tagespost*, 29.12.1919, in *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 3, p. 53.





In Graz, therefore, the actors, because of such difficulties, were unable to stay within the boundaries of Expressionist style: "Die Wortstürze, unter die Kaiser die Schauspieler stellt, belasten die anders gewohnten Schultern übermässig. Es gab Rückfälle ins Sudermännische."<sup>4</sup>

Usually, when *Gas I* was produced well, the most acclaimed moments in a production were either the first act (the explosion) or the fourth act (the dynamic linguistic power of the masses; the clash of ideas). However, these acts were not always successful. In Munich, Rudolf Hoch directed Kaiser's play at the Schauspielhaus with Wilhelm Dieterle as the Milliardärsohn and Lothar Müthel and Alexander Granach as Arbeiter (9.11.1919). Hoch's staging of the mass scene failed dismally (87). Hoch decided to have the speakers address the audience directly, doing away with the presence of the masses on stage and substituting instead ineffectual sound effects (87). The tribunal was placed at the top of a high staircase, which rose up into the dome of the hall (84). Eight workers in succession climbed up to the tribunal, gave their speeches to their invisible comrades and rushed down again (86). This was especially monotonous because of the constant repetition of the procedure, the lack of dramatic momentum and intensity and because of the lack of response from the absent masses (86, 87). In Weimar, Ernst Hardt's production (1919) at the Deutsches Nationaltheater also had its unfortunate moments. The

-----  
<sup>4</sup>Möller, *Tagespost*, 29.12.1919.





explosion was completely ineffective on account of the inadequate special effects (90). Hardt did not seem very intent on presenting the play as an example of Expressionism. The actors were allowed to make their parts more human and Max Brock's non-visionary weisser Herr, with his elegant gloves, top-hat and cane, was absolutely inappropriate and unsatisfactory (89).

It was common, as in Munich, Weimar, Darmstadt and Dresden, to merge the fourth and fifth acts. Usually, the scene with the Regierungsvertreter was cut, leaving, from the fifth act, only the final scene – the daughter's promise to give birth to the "Neuer Mensch". However, as one of the Weimar critics remarked, this meant that the Milliardärsohn appeared at the beginning of the fifth act already wounded (89)! As elsewhere, the daughter's promise was widely condemned in the provinces as unconvincing (89), as "ein deus ex machina" (94) and as "ein Verlegenheitsausweg".<sup>5</sup> The fact that the father of the "Neuer Mensch" was an officer, whose aristocratic outlook and behaviour were totally out of place in modern, post-First World War Germany, did nothing to make the ending more acceptable.<sup>6</sup>

Jacobsohn's remarks (33, 40, 43), with regard to *Von morgens*

---

<sup>5</sup>anon., *Darmstädter Tagblatt*, 17.6.1920, in *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 27, p. 552.

<sup>6</sup>Dr. Carl Anton Piper in Hamburg writes: "Der Leiter hat sogar einen Offizier zum Schwiegersohn, der, aus der vorsudermännlichen Zeit stammend, wie ein Neandertaler unter Menschen des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts wirkt [...]. Dass aus diesem Geschlecht einst der Messias kommen wird, wie die Schlussworte anzudeuten scheinen, wirkt ebenfalls sehr fragwürdig" (*Hamburger Nachrichten*, 30.1.1920, in *Die Kritik*, 1920, No. 7, p. 148).



*bis mitternachts*, that, for Kaiser to be effective, he had to be produced at a fast and furious pace, proved true also in the case of *Gas I*. Dr. Felix Zimmermann (93) complained that Berthold Viertel's attempt to stage *Gas I*, at the Schauspielhaus in Dresden (1920), at a slow pace was totally inappropriate and thought that Kaiser's play could only be successful when presented at a feverish tempo. Viertel's attempt to bring out, through this leisurely production, the hidden meaning behind the words only revealed to Friedrich Kummer (92) the play's lack of depth and that there was very little behind the language.

Often, *Gas I* was presented in a manner which attempted to emphasize the play's content. At the Städtische Schauspiele in Baden-Baden (1919), the stage designs were bare so that the audience would not be distracted at all by visual effects from the "characters" and the ideas which they represented (80). In Augsburg (1920), at the Stadttheater, Hermann Merz, the director, tried to reproduce a skeletal, abstract Expressionist stage design by avoiding all details and only using those props which were absolutely necessary (96). The critic for the *Neue Augsburger Zeitung* considered these sets very effective although the initial public reaction to this production was cool (95, 96). In the fourth act, Merz experimented with light and darkness. He left the speakers shrouded in darkness in order to accentuate their words by eliminating any visual distractions; thus, their ideas could be presented from this





empty space with an heightened sense of immediacy. At the Stadttheater in Barmen (1919), Hanns Lotz tried to enhance the visual effectiveness of Kaiser's drama by emphasizing its colour symbolism (e.g. the schwarzen Herren stood out against a white background) (81).

By now (1919), as in Munich, the actors were beginning to come to terms with the demands of the new Expressionist style. Hoch made conscious efforts to present a consistently Expressionist production. The language was expressed in short ecstatic outbursts and screams; the movements of the puppet-like actors were stylised, jerky and abrupt (84, 88). This was a highly disciplined ensemble production, in which all the actors subjugated their personalities to an over-riding stylistic concept and even the performers of the minor roles were not allowed to fall out of style (85). There was much praise from the Munich critics for the ensemble of the Schauspielhaus because of their harmonious, stylish performance (85, 86). L. G. Oberlaender (88), however, was sceptical of this depersonalised Expressionist technique, which he saw as undermining acting, in that it imposed limitations on the actors by not allowing them scope for individual characterisation. Cäsar Kunz's sets, which made use of projections, presented only stylised outlines (84, 86). Despite the failure of the fourth act, this production of *Gas I* was warmly received by the Munich public (84, 85, 88).



Opposing conclusions were reached with regard to Kaiser's message of "Menschlichkeit" and the "Neuer Mensch". In Halberstadt, Kaiser's work was seen as embodying the principles of socialism. The *Milliardärsohn*'s attempts to overcome the alienation of the workers within industrial capitalism through his appeal for a return to nature, which would allow them to fulfill their potential as human beings, reflected Lassalle's words that the real cause of the working-class was essentially "der Kampf um die Menschheit" (82). In contrast, Alfred Polgar (97), who earlier had been suspicious of Kaiser's seriousness in his treatment of social problems (64), was very tired of high-minded appeals and was extremely sceptical of Kaiser's humanitarianism, describing the refrain "Mensch, sei Mensch" as "eine recht kitschige Melodie".

In September 1928, *Gas I* was revived by Leopold Jessner at the Berlin Schillertheater,<sup>''</sup> with Alexander Granach, once more appearing in a Kaiser play, as the Schreiber, Lothar Müthel as the Ingenieur and Walter Franck as the *Milliardärsohn*. This production gave critics a chance to look back to earlier Kaiser productions and to re-evaluate Kaiser's importance as a dramatist in the light of historical development. Ihering (98) praised Kaiser for breathing new life into German drama. At a time when German theatre was struggling, Kaiser introduced new intellectual conflicts and new stylistic problems. When first writing,

---

<sup>''</sup>This is also referred to as the Staatstheater and the Staatliches Schillertheater.



Kaiser had been ahead of his times stylistically although, by now, the style of *Gas I* seemed flawed and dated. The critic for the Berlin *12 Uhr Blatt* (100), however, disagreed with Ihering, finding the play's form and language still acceptable but criticising the social themes which were less valid because political reality had advanced to such a stage that a return to nature was not really feasible. Other Berlin critics also thought that, by 1928, *Gas I* with its call for agricultural collectivism had become dated (102, 104).<sup>98</sup> Ihering's main criticism of the play was that Kaiser glossed over the real issues involved in the conflict between humanitarianism and industrialism. In a manner similar to Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis*, Kaiser's exaggerated treatment of reality did not depict actual, realistic social problems. As a result, *Gas I* failed to do justice to the social situation but instead merely presented a false antithesis between agricultural collectivism and industrialism. Fechter, considering this one of Kaiser's best works, still had great respect for Kaiser in 1928 and would have been happy, if other contemporary writers possessed a small fraction of Kaiser's intellectualism and theatrical ability.<sup>99</sup>

-----  
<sup>98</sup>However, Fechter (99) still considered Kaiser's themes "aktuell" and Franz Leppmann (103) even thought that the play's relevance had increased.

<sup>99</sup>Paul Fechter (1880-1958) edited the literary supplement of the "national-liberalen" *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, which, at its peak, had a circulation of 60-70,000. See Rühle, pp. 1164-65.





Unlike Legband's stylish Expressionist production at the Volksbühne in 1919, Jessner, influenced by "die neue Sachlichkeit", tried to present *Gas I* realistically (99). The end result was mixed in that certain features of the play came over very successfully while other aspects were disappointing. Fechter would have preferred a production with more unreality and fantasy. The visionary *weisse Herr* was far more effective in Legband's non-realistic Expressionist version than here, where Albert Florath presented the part too realistically. Franz Servaes (104)<sup>100</sup> also complained that Jessner's treatment failed to do justice to the non-realistic features of the work. He was not only disappointed by the *weisse Herr* but also by the *schwarzen Herren*, who, instead of being presented, in identical costumes, as grotesque caricatures of capitalism, in stark contrast to the sincere humanitarianism of their fellow industrialist, the *Milliardärsohn*, appeared no different than the *Milliardärsohn*, who could easily have been taken for one of them. Likewise, Franz Leppmann felt that Jessner's non-visionary, non-stylised production neglected "das Jenseitige" in *Gas I*.

-----  
<sup>100</sup>Franz Servaes (1862-1947) was, from 1919, a critic for the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*. Rühle writes: "Servaes, konservativ im Äusseren, war in der Gesinnung deutsch-national, als Kritiker nicht sehr differenziert, oft anschaulich beschreibend, im Urteil immer summarisch und entschieden bis zur schroffen Parteilichkeit. Er schrieb populär, gab sich als Hüter ethischer Werte, unterstützte Arnolt Bronnen, kämpfte gegen Jessner und noch mehr gegen Piscator [...]" (p. 1175).



Whereas the particularly Expressionist features of *Gas I* were diluted and ineffective (der weisse Herr, die schwarzen Herren), those aspects which could be presented realistically were exploited to the utmost. Jessner's was a highly technical, full-scale production which made great use of sensational special effects. Flashing lights, sirens and a machine-gun all added to the atmosphere. The explosion in the first act was so realistic that the theatre was filled with smoke from the gun-powder for the rest of the performance (101). Indeed, there was much praise for this explosion and the mass scene in Act IV (98, 102, 105). *Gas I* was performed, without an interval, at a tremendous pace, the five acts being compressed into a meagre one and a half hours (102, 104). For the critic from the *12 Uhr Blatt* (100), only the brisk tempo of the production made the play still bearable. Jessner changed the ending of the fifth act. The daughter's unconvincing promise was followed by the return of the workers into the factory. Leppmann (103) was not really happy with this de-emphasis of the daughter's vision of the "Neuer Mensch"; Fritz Engel (105), however, although he wanted the fifth act, with its dreadfully banal promise, to be cut, praised the dramatic power of the final scene as the workers filed back silently into the factory.

Not everyone was pleased by Jessner's imaginative effects. Ernst Degner (101) complained that Jessner's spectacular presentation, instead of underscoring Kaiser's dynamic language, tended to distract from the words. There





was too much concentration on superficial external effects, on the visual and aural aspects, at the expense of the play's inner meaning. The worst insult for Degner was to claim that Jessner had been influenced in this production by the childish techniques of the film director Fritz Lang implying that they were only fit for a cinema audience but had no place in the theatre! It is interesting to note that, when Degner and Ihering compared this production to Fritz Lang's techniques and to his film *Metropolis* (1926), the comparison was meant in a negative sense. Kaiser's other Expressionist plays were also frequently criticised by his contemporaries for being too influenced by film techniques. Whereas nowadays films are accepted as a valid art form and Fritz Lang is well respected as one of the pioneers of serious German cinema, during the Weimar Republic it was more of an insult to compare a playwright to a film director and to call a play "cinematic". Films were rejected as vehicles of cheap sensationalism and melodrama, which lacked the "intellectual depths" of drama. While the cinema was popularistic and for the lower classes, the theatre was for those with elevated tastes, for the respectable members of society. Therefore, the frequent comparison of Kaiser's works at this time to the invalid "culture" of the cinema was no compliment.

At least this version of *Gas I* was popular with its audience, who received it warmly (99, 101). Despite the generally realistic production, one actor seemed to



exemplify the essence of Georg Kaiser and the Expressionist movement. Veit Harlan, as der Arbeiter mit der Gasmaske, personified the anguished Expressionist scream of horror at man's inhumanity to man; his was "ein Schrei des Menschen [...], ein Schrei gegen alle Gaskriege" (100).

### *Hölle Weg Erde*

*Hölle Weg Erde*, the first version of which was written in 1918–19, was published in 1919 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). The premiere at the Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. (directed by Arthur Hellmer on 5.12.1919) was the only Kaiser premiere in 1919.<sup>101</sup> This play fulfills the daughter's promise at the end of *Gas I* and also answers Diebold's plea that he would like to see the "Neuer Mensch" in the present.<sup>102</sup> *Hölle Weg Erde* presents not just one "Neuer Mensch" (Spazierer) but universal regeneration in a new heaven on earth. This very optimistic, very utopian work has been described as "the

-----  
<sup>101</sup>Huder (Kaiser, *Werke*, VI, 876), Schürer (*Kaiser*, p. 15) and Kenworthy (p. 203) all list the premiere of *Hölle Weg Erde* as taking place not only in Frankfurt/M. but also at the Kammerspiele, Munich and the Lessing-Theater, Berlin on 5.12.1919. I could find no evidence of these Munich and Berlin Uraufführungen. W. Petzet lists the productions at the Munich Kammerspiele in his book *Theater – Die Münchner Kammerspiele 1911–1972* but there is no mention of a 1919 production of *Hölle Weg Erde*, pp. 588–89. The earliest Berlin production which I could find documented is Barnowsky's production of *Hölle Weg Erde* at the Lessing-Theater on 20.1.1920. This is described in *Die Kritik* as the Erstaufführung of Kaiser's drama in Berlin which would imply that there had not been an earlier production of *Hölle Weg Erde* there – *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 6, p. 122.

<sup>102</sup>See review no. 67.





only entirely activist play that Kaiser ever wrote",<sup>103</sup> as "Kaiser's only positive Expressionist drama".<sup>104</sup> This "Stationendrama" can be seen as the third part of an "Erneuerungs-Tetralogie"<sup>105</sup> (*Die Koralie, Gas I, Hölle Weg Erde, Gas II*) because it is linked by the theme of regeneration to the *Gas*-trilogy. It is a bridge from the forced optimism of the ending of *Gas I* to the dire pessimism of *Gas II*. It is not uncommon nowadays to see *Hölle Weg Erde* dismissed as an unconvincing experiment in utopianism.

Schürer writes of Kaiser's play:

It is, indeed, one of his weakest plays. [...] one gets the feeling that Kaiser himself did not believe in his own words. [...] *Hölle Weg Erde* and *Gas II*, written about the same time, give the impression of being exercises in symmetry rather than dramas.<sup>106</sup>

*Hölle Weg Erde* was a disappointment to many Frankfurt critics. This time, Georg Kaiser seemed to have departed from the ranks of the moderate Expressionists. Richard Dohse (108), although conceding that Kaiser's theme was very relevant, complained that the treatment of this theme was so implausible and the dramatic style of *Hölle Weg Erde* so radical that the play could not be considered in any way to be furthering the cause of Expressionism. This work was unable to win over those who were already sceptical of Kaiser's inner calling as a poet (110). The critic for the Frankfurt *General-Anzeiger* (113) thought that *Hölle Weg Erde* had not fulfilled its potential. With its powerful attack on

<sup>103</sup>Kenworthy, p. 35.

<sup>104</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>105</sup>Rühle, p. 183. See also Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 231, note 69.

<sup>106</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 97.





capitalism, it could have been a truly revolutionary drama which would have exposed the deep moral degeneration of contemporary life. However, Kaiser lacked the necessary conviction and his play was too intellectual to achieve this breakthrough. For Josef Meier (109), Kaiser's initial promise as a writer remained unfulfilled and *Hölle Weg Erde*, instead of opening up new directions, merely proved that Expressionism was at a dead-end. Dohse, whose review was totally negative, condemned the play as bizarre and incomprehensible, objecting to its obscure symbolism and finding the twelve "Bilder" monotonous. Deeply dissatisfied, he concluded that cold, calculated technical effects could not be considered a compensation for a lack of feeling. Kaiser's drama was so technically accomplished, so symmetrical in construction that Max Geisenheyner (110) found this distressing. From the hostile Frankfurt reception, it would appear that Georg Kaiser's Expressionist works and Expressionism itself were now falling out of favour. Fred Hildenbrandt (111), who had had enough of Kaiser's over-intellectual, contrived works and his lack of feeling, thought that it was time for a new direction in German drama. Traditional criteria were starting to re-assert themselves against the tide of modernism. For Josef Meier, *Hölle Weg Erde* was too confusing and its ideas, because of the incomprehensible, repetitious language, were too unclear. Rejecting its senseless jumble of words, he advocated instead a literature with values.



Apart from these general comments on Kaiser's drama, individual aspects also came under fire. Diebold (106) was pleased that the daughter's pregnancy in *Gas I* had been brought to fruition not just with one "Neuer Mensch" (Spazierer) but with a completely regenerate mankind. He admired the play's construction (107) and considered the first part, "Hölle", with its powerful attack on contemporary capitalism, the best of the play's three sections (106). The second part, "Weg", however, was a disappointment because Spazierer's regeneration did not occur on stage but had already taken place in the interval before the start of the second section and because the mass regeneration was too sudden and unprepared (106, 107). This unconvincing, poorly motivated universal regeneration of society at large was dismissed as the play's main weakness (106, 112),<sup>10</sup> as too utopian (107). The third part, "Erde", was unsatisfactory because Kaiser did not crown his vision of redemption on earth, of universal brotherhood, with a climax of lyrical splendour. Kaiser's failure here to rise to new heights of poetic intensity only proved the insincerity of his vision (107). For the critic from the *Frankfurter Volkszeitung* (112), the play's sound dramatic technique sufficiently compensated for the weaknesses of certain details. Yet he was particularly unhappy with Kaiser's language, which he insulted in one of the worst

-----  
<sup>10</sup>The critic for the *General-Anzeiger* was less critical and, although he was in a minority, praised the psychological subtlety of the mass transformation.





ways imaginable at this time by saying that, on occasion, it was even more awful than Sternheim's distortions of the German language! The critic for the *General-Anzeiger* regretted Kaiser's omission of articles and his "sprachliche Vergewaltigungen".

Hellmer's production was considered totally consistent with Expressionist aims (108, 113).<sup>108</sup> F. K. Delavilla's abstract sets, which changed for each of the three parts, were, with their powerful colours and bold lines, an imaginative mixture of cubism and futurism (106, 108, 109, 111). Hellmer used magical light and darkness effects to create a suitable atmosphere and to bring out the play's symbolism (108, 109, 113). The style of acting was also appropriate – the typically Expressionist combination of jerky, puppet-like movements and ecstatic outbursts (108). The critic for the *General-Anzeiger* praised Hellmer for the stylistic unity of this Expressionist production. In contrast to his Frankfurt colleagues, Diebold thought that there was a contradiction in the style of the performance between the cubist outer framework of the stage design and the decorative, realistic "Bilder" within this framework (106). He was also concerned with the problem of Expressionist acting (106, 107). However, Diebold shared a misconception about Expressionist acting which was common among his contemporaries. Since his views on acting were

-----  
<sup>108</sup>There is a photograph of this production in Steffens, p. 130. Here, Steffens dates the production in 1920 but, on p. 19, he dates it correctly as taking place on 5.12.1919.



still conventional, he believed that the actor had to add the warmth and feeling lacking in Kaiser's skeletal "characters", that he had to make them into real living beings of flesh and blood – and thus "mitemerlebbbar". This was a total misunderstanding because Expressionist acting required the exact opposite of traditional characterisation. Indeed, Kaiser's figures were intended to be presented on stage as they had been written, i.e. as abstract, depersonalised, dehumanised representatives of a society debased by materialism.

Despite Hellmer's accomplished production, or perhaps because of its Expressionist features and the weaknesses in Kaiser's text, *Hölle Weg Erde* was not an overwhelming public success in Frankfurt.<sup>10</sup> The reports of the critics varied – Fred Hildenbrandt described the reaction of the audience as cold and unfavourable; according to Dohse, despite some applause and some dissent, the majority of the spectators remained silent and were unconvinced; others reported a mixture of applause and protests (109, 110, 112).

Viktor Barnowsky directed the Berlin premiere of *Hölle Weg Erde* on 20.1.1920, at the Lessing-Theater with Eugen Klöpfer as the Juwelier, Kurt Goetz as the Anwalt, Theodor Loos as Spazierer and Tilla Durieux as Lili. By now, the Berlin critics were starting to lose interest in Kaiser's Expressionist techniques and themes. For Willi Handl (115),

-----  
<sup>10</sup> The critic for the *General-Anzeiger* thought that, to really enjoy the play, a high level of concentration was required on the part of the spectator because of the work's confusing ideas and unclear plot.





the Expressionist themes of humanity and freedom, of justice and injustice, which had been proclaimed so often in recent years from the stage, were now so familiar that they no longer had any impact. Techniques which Kaiser had used effectively in the earlier Expressionist plays and for which he had once been praised now seemed unconvincing. Although Monty Jacobs (121) thought that the structure of *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, with its use of leitmotifs and repetition, was very effective, he denounced the symmetrical structure of *Hölle Weg Erde*, where the scenes in "Weg" reverse the order of the scenes in "Hölle", as too contrived and schematic.<sup>110</sup> At least by 1920, critics like Jacobsohn had acquired a clear understanding of the particular aims of Expressionism and knew what to expect from the movement. Jacobsohn (117) realised that Kaiser, in contrast to earlier movements like Impressionism, which would have presented the attack on capitalism in Part I at a leisurely pace and with great detail, was being consistent with Expressionist purposes in his breathless, non-detailed depiction of contemporary society in "Hölle" and in his use of ecstatic, pregnant language.

Many of the same points were raised in Berlin which had been made in Frankfurt with regard to the details of Kaiser's text. Ihering (114) praised the first part "Hölle"

-----  
<sup>110</sup>The order of the scenes in the first two parts is as follows: "Hölle" – Grand-Hotel (goldroter Rundsalon); Hafthaus; Anwaltsstube; Strassenkrümmung mit Juwelierladen; "Weg" – Landstrasse mit Brücke; Die Strassenkrümmung; Die Anwaltsstube; Das Hafthaus; Der goldrote Rundsalon.





for its accurate reproduction of the mechanised soullessness of life under capitalism. Falk (120), too, considered the first part with its powerful introduction of the play's themes as the best, but was then disappointed by the subsequent sections. Instead of the action blossoming to a satisfactory climax, the rest, on account of over-frequent repetition, degenerated to the banal. Like Diebold (106), Jacobsohn complained that Spazierer's regeneration took place off-stage, during the interval between Parts I and II. As we do not witness the process of Spazierer's development, we are not convinced by his regeneration and the subsequent regeneration of mankind. Fritz Engel (119) also found the mass transformation poorly motivated and rather sudden. Whereas, for Jacobsohn, "Weg" was a disappointment, "Erde" was a major anticlimax. This third section, instead of presenting a dialectical clash of ideas, was disappointing because of its lack of development. Finished statements were merely chanted in an atmosphere of forced optimism. Kaiser's solution to the problems of mankind did not convince Ihering. He saw Kaiser's achievement in his rejection of capitalism and thought that Kaiser was at his best only when being negative. However, his attempt to provide an alternative was so weak and insincere that all it amounted to really was a statement of nihilism. This improbable idea of universal brotherhood was not a realistic social alternative but merely "Weltflucht".



Although there was much criticism of Kaiser's text, Barnowsky was generally praised for attempting all he could to save a poor play.<sup>111</sup> César Klein's atmospheric sets used powerful colours and simple lines to indicate only what was absolutely essential (115). Fritz Engel praised the imaginative visual effects, describing the scenes as "schöne Traumbilder". Good use was made of lighting effects, of shadows and darkness (especially in the scenes on the bridge, on the stony plain and with the lawyer) (118). The hotel room was presented in garish colours, the bridge non-realistically. It was shrouded in cloud and darkness to make it appear less concrete and physical (114). Red colours and red lighting added to the mood of the first part "Hölle" (117). Several Berlin critics viewed Barnowsky's colourful, unified, stylised production favourably (115, 118, 120). Bie thought that Barnowsky had successfully subjugated the personalities of his actors to an overall stylistic concept and felt that none of the actors had fallen out of style.<sup>112</sup> Jacobs considered the production a fine example of the contemporary puppet-like acting. Kurt Goetz as the Anwalt, with his enormously long moustache, his red hair and squeaky voice, was a bizarre, grotesque caricature of the stilted legal profession (115, 119, 120). Klein-Rogge as the Hafthausleutnant was particularly stylised (118) and

---

<sup>111</sup>There is a photograph of this production in Steffens, p. 131.

<sup>112</sup>Oscar Bie (1864-1938) was the opera critic for the *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, although he sometimes reviewed plays as well. See Rühle, p. 1161.





machine-like.<sup>113</sup> The depersonalised style of acting was a possible reason for the failure of this production. Fritz Engel could no longer tolerate the restrictive Expressionist style, which, with its lack of nuance, lost its novelty after the first section and from then on was merely irritating and boring. Instead, he would have liked a return to the variety of traditional acting which allowed the actors scope for individual initiative and which emphasized characterisation and human values.<sup>114</sup>

Some Berlin critics did not agree with Bie that the style of acting was consistent. Hugo Kubsch described the acting as a stylistic mixture, as "expressionistisch-naturalistisch". Indeed, Eugen Klöpfer as the Juwelier, in attempting to make his part plausible, slipped out of style "ins wahre Menschentum hinab".<sup>115</sup> Engel also remarked that Klöpfer, instead of performing in an abstract, depersonalised manner, made his role life-like. Ihering, although he considered the acting good, felt that the actors lacked intensity and that there were losses of style. Whereas Loos, in the main role, managed to avoid lapsing into realism, Ihering thought that Klöpfer was out of style and that Goetz, in trying to go beyond realism,

---

<sup>113</sup>Hugo Kubsch, *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 21.1.1920, in *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 6, p. 123.

<sup>114</sup>Rühle writes of Fritz Engel (1867–1935), who worked for the *Berliner Tageblatt*: "Engels geistige Heimat war die goethische Welt, deren Begriffe und Massstäbe (wie das ausgehende Jahrhundert sie verstand) in vielen seiner Kritiken wiederkehrten. Er hatte und verkündete keine selbständige Vorstellung vom modernen Theater [...]" (p. 1163).

<sup>115</sup>Kubsch, *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 21.1.1920.



fell back into Naturalism. He was not quite satisfied with the production. The effect was not powerful, not revolutionary enough. Because Barnowsky lacked that final intensity which was so essential for truly Expressionist art, he failed to achieve "die Konzentration zum Schrei". Although Jacobsohn felt that Barnowsky had been able to force his actors to deny their personalities for the sake of an artistic experiment, he agreed with Ihering that Barnowsky and the actors lacked "Steigerung". For Jacobsohn, Barnowsky's production was too true to the text in that it failed to overcome the weaknesses of Kaiser's original. Just as the text deteriorated in quality, so too unfortunately, after a promising beginning, did the stage performance deteriorate.

Kaiser's *Hölle Weg Erde* caused a public scandal at the Lessing-Theater.<sup>116</sup> Violent passions were aroused as the rowdy spectators interrupted the performance with outbursts of hissing and shouting. The public unrest began after the first part, as the play became more uncompromisingly Expressionist in the second and third sections (115, 118). "Hölle", at least, had a fast tempo and a clearly understandable conflict between Spazierer's humanitarianism and the indifferent materialism of the rest of society. However, as the play progressed, the symbolism increased and

-----  
<sup>116</sup>Tilla Durieux, who played Lili, writes: "In einer Premiere von Georg Kaiser, *Hölle Weg Erde*, leistete sich das Berliner Publikum wieder einen Skandal. Mit Pfeifen und Johlen endete dieser Abend" (*Eine Tür steht offen* [Berlin: Herbig, 1954], p. 259).





the tempo slowed. In the last two parts, the focus of the action became blurred, there was no dramatic tension, no clash of opposites (116, 118). Handl (116) thought that the play was too intellectual for its audience, who, since they could not understand what Kaiser was trying to say, did not really give it a chance. As soon as the abstract, intellectual aspects began to predominate after Part I, dissent started. Indeed, it was the particularly Expressionist features of the production (the ghostly, shadowy march over the bridge; the misty stony plain) which most of all incited the audience's mocking laughter (120). In addition, Kaiser's affected "Telegrammstil", his attacks on the German language in imitation of Sternheim, gave the spectators a further cause for hysteria (120, 122).''

Monty Jacobs still regarded *Hölle Weg Erde*, despite its failure, as far more interesting than many other successful works. He attributed the hostile public reception to Kaiser's desire to be innovative both theatrically and thematically. Consequently, his style was too extreme and his social problems too uncomfortable for many complacent contemporary theatregoers. With *Hölle Weg Erde*, Kaiser had moved from the moderate ranks of the Expressionist movement to a far more radical position. However, the Berlin public, who by now were becoming disaffected with Expressionist

---

''Max Herrmann-Neisse thought that Loos's acting also highlighted the weaknesses of Kaiser's language: "Von den Schauspielern enthüllte Theodor Loos die Zweifelhaftigkeit der literarischen Vorlage, weil in seiner gesetzten Diktion das Unechte der Kaiserschen Phraseologie klar zutage trat" (*Die neue Schaubühne*, 2, No. 3, March 1920, 81).





techniques, had not made the same transition. Their hostility revealed a remarkable degree of alienation towards Kaiser's play, its Expressionist ideas, its language and Barnowsky's Expressionist presentation.

## Gas II

*Gas II*, the third part of the *Gas*-trilogy or the fourth part of a tetralogy, if *Hölle Weg Erde* is included, was written in 1918–19 and published in 1920 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). In contrast to the forced optimism of the ending of *Gas I* and of *Hölle Weg Erde*, *Gas II* presents a bitter rejection of utopianism and the idea of regeneration. Expressionist hopes for the dawning of a new age after the First World War, for a "Neuer Mensch", are buried in the universal destruction of mankind. With dire pessimism, an industrial society is depicted which is heading towards inevitable doom. There are also contemporary overtones to the play, e.g. the reparations demanded by the victors at the end of the second act can be seen as a reference to the reparations which Germany had to make to the Allies after the First World War.<sup>118</sup> L. Lewin, in 1926, considered *Gas II* highly topical:

Erlebte unsere Zeit nicht alles, was hier im Abbild  
enthalten ist: vom Munitionsarbeiterstreik bis zur  
Revolution, vom Friedensdiktat bis zum passiven  
Widerstand, ja bis zu den jüngsten  
Giftgas-Diskussionen? – – Militaristen und  
Pazifisten, das verächtlich-ekle Geschmeiss der

---

<sup>118</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 106 and p. 158.



Masse wie demagogisch-skrupellose Führerselbstsucht,  
 utopischen Kommunismus und ad absurdum geführten  
 Idealismus?<sup>119</sup>

Walter H. Sokel has quite rightly described the play as "the most radical example of Expressionist style and dramatic technique".<sup>120</sup> *Gas II* is, in many ways, uncompromisingly avantgarde – the "characters" are extremely depersonalised and dehumanised; the language, sets and action are all reduced to a bare minimum. It would have been a major surprise if Kaiser's contemporaries, some of whom even had problems understanding *Die Bürger von Calais*, had lavished praise on this stark, futuristic vision. *Gas II* was translated into French (1921), into English (1924) and into Swedish (1925).

The premiere, which took place on 29.10.1920 at the Vereinigte deutsche Theater in Brünn,<sup>121</sup> was directed by Dr. Beer. Kaiser, whose drama was criticised as unclear on account of its confusing language, disappointed the critic for the *Tagesbote* (123), because, with this unconvincing work, he did not seem to have fulfilled his potential as a writer. Although the actors were unable to do justice to the required style of acting, Beer's symbolical production, with its stylised sets, was well received by the Brünn public and praised by the critics, who considered the evening a success (123, 124).

-----  
<sup>119</sup>L. Lewin, *Die Jagd nach dem Erlebnis* (Berlin: Verlag die Schmiede, 1926), p. 111.

<sup>120</sup>Sokel, p. 201.

<sup>121</sup>Brünn is in modern Czechoslovakia.





The "Reichsdeutsche Uraufführung" of *Gas II* took place at the Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. on 13.11.1920 in a production directed by Arthur Hellmer. Kaiser's drama was a bitter disappointment to the Frankfurt critics (e.g. 130). Dohse (125) complained that the play did not break any new ground but merely presented the same themes, language and style as in earlier works. Diebold (127) thought that Kaiser's contrived experimentation with social problems only discredited the sincerity of his convictions. By now, he was becoming dissatisfied with Kaiser's Expressionist dramas which, with their non-individualised "characters", language and acting-style, were too uniform stylistically and so symmetrical that they lacked life (128). Although the play's structure confirmed again Kaiser's technical ability (125, 127), *Gas II* came under severe attack. The language in particular, which was denounced for going to the extremes of Expressionism, was condemned as an artificial, tasteless distortion of German (125, 130), as unclear and confusing (127). The "Telegrammstil" seemed totally unsuited to the play's political subject-matter and tended to undermine the spectator's confidence in the honesty of Kaiser's social convictions (129). For Diebold (127), the plot was too skeletal, the "characters" too abstract. He was sceptical of the ending, believing that Kaiser had only presented this universal destruction of mankind as a way of preventing himself from having to write a subsequent *Gas III*, *Gas IV*, etc. (128). Theodor Haubach (126) was also unconvinced by



the ending and felt that the third act was poorly linked to the previous two. *Gas II* was too radical for Dohse, who dismissed the play as contrived and unclear and its style as monotonous.

Despite their objections to the work's Expressionist features, the Frankfurt critics were not blind to its contemporary political overtones. The "Weltgas" was understood as symbolising the "Weltkrieg" (127), the action was seen as taking place in one of the defeated countries after the First World War (128), with the Blaufiguren representing the conquered countries, the Gelbfiguren the victorious nations (127). The failure in Act II of the workers' aspirations for pacifism and international brotherhood represented the defeat of international pacifism (129). The demands of the victorious Gelbfiguren for reparations, the subsequent fall in production because of the alienating slavery of working for others echoed the plight of occupied Germany after the First World War, which under the Treaty of Versailles had to make reparations to the Allies (129). Haubach thought that the importance of *Gas II* in 1920 arose from this topicality.

Dohse praised Hellmer's excellent production and the acting of Karchow and Zistig in the main parts. However, Hellmer's true interpretation of *Gas II*, with Reinhold Schön's symmetrical, cubist sets,<sup>122</sup> only confirmed to Diebold (128) the play's lack of substance. This drama was

---

<sup>122</sup>There is a photograph of the stage design in Kenworthy, facing p. 57.



not a success with the Frankfurt public. There was some applause and a little dissent, but most of the audience just received the play in stony silence (125, 130). Rudolf Frank (129) attributed part of the play's ineffectiveness to the inappropriate language which hindered the public's comprehension of the contemporary themes. Haubach was surprised that there was no scandal although Kaiser had recently been arrested.<sup>1 2 3</sup> For Diebold (128), the icy indifference of most of the audience resulted from *Gas II*'s skeletal form and lack of intellectual content. Yet one actress in a very minor role stood out from all the others and her moving performance provided Diebold with at least one favourable impression of this production. Diebold praised the talents of Helene Weigel, who fleshed out as a human being her skeletal part as a Greisin. One has the feeling that perhaps it was not entirely Kaiser's aim that his characters should be fleshed out and that, once again, Diebold, in advocating traditional acting criteria, was really denying Kaiser's attempts to present man's alienation and dehumanisation in an industrial society, especially when he continued by implying that the actors had to supply the individual characteristics "lacking" in Kaiser's text.

The Erstaufführung of *Gas II* in Magdeburg, at the Stadttheater, also took place in November, 1920. Once again, the events of the play were related to Germany's situation.

-----  
<sup>1 2 3</sup>Kaiser had been arrested on 13.10.1920 and charged with embezzlement. On 15.2.1921, he was sentenced to one year in prison for embezzlement. See Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 15.





The critic for the *Magdeburger Tageszeitung* (131) saw the plot up to the end of the second act as reflecting symbolically Germany's recent history – its fall from power, revolution, defeat, reparations and slavery. The third act, however, with its view of the future, seemed to avoid the issue of what Kaiser had to say to a country in dire distress. The play, which was considered an extreme Expressionist work with regard to its structure, characters and language, was criticised for its ineffective, simplistic use of symmetry and its excessive repetition.

This reviewer was unimpressed by the local production which highlighted the dangers involved in the staging of an avantgarde drama by a provincial theatre. Because *Glaube und Heimat* was being performed the same evening in the Wilhelm-Theater with the town's best actors, all that remained for *Gas II* was a less talented support cast, which was not large enough to fill all the roles. As a result, some of the actors had to play more than one part. This proved particularly inadequate since five of the seven Blaufiguren reappeared as Gelbfiguren, which gave the false impression that the enemy invasion only amounted to a harmless change of costumes. The wrongly positioned tables led to unintentionally comic dialogues and the tempo of the second act was too slow. The worst aspect of Vogeler's uninspired production was his disastrous finale. The enemy bombardment was hardly spectacular, the "annihilated" workers could be seen in the semi-darkness leaving the stage



at a leisurely pace and the Gelbfigur, who speaks the play's final words, could not be seen, because Vogeler, the director and the performer of this part, did not want to reappear after the performance to thank the audience for their applause wearing a yellow uniform and steel helmet!

In 1924, Dr. Beer, who had directed the premiere of *Gas II* in Brünn, staged *Gas I* and *II* together at the Raimund-Theater, Vienna. Reduced to seven acts and performed at a brisk pace, this production lasted about two and a half hours (132). For Polgar, the poetic highlight of *Gas II* was the second act with the workers' aspirations to fulfill their potential as human beings. Noticing Prussian influence in Kaiser's compressed diction, he admired the dynamic quality of Kaiser's language. Polgar thought that in Act II of *Gas II*, as the workers tried to communicate their new aspirations to the outside world, the phrase "Ausbleibt Antwort!", with the unusual positioning of "Ausbleibt" (and also the non-separation of the separable prefix) was a far more emphatic, far more dramatic use of language than "Keine Antwort!" would have been. He was still sceptical of Kaiser's sincerity in his proclamation of human solidarity. Again, he felt that Kaiser lacked a true passion for such ideals, that his humanitarianism was a little contrived. Beer's production was praised for its mass scenes. However, the realistic props appeared out of place in the rarefied atmosphere of *Gas*. In 1924, Polgar considered *Gas I* and *II*, which, when first released, had seemed ahead of their times,





now to be out-of-date.

## Conclusion

After years of obscurity, Kaiser achieved his breakthrough as a dramatist with his Expressionist plays. The premieres of *Die Bürger von Calais* and *Von morgens bis mitternachts* in January and April 1917 established him, in a remarkably short time, at the forefront of contemporary German drama. His initial breakthrough came about in the provinces; Kaiser's first success in Berlin was not until Legband's production of *Gas I* on 25.2.1919. The first Berlin productions of the other major Expressionist plays (*Die Koralle*, *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, *Die Bürger von Calais*, and *Hölle Weg Erde*) all ended in failure and it was not until the premieres of *Nebeneinander* and *Kolportage* (in 1923 and 1924) that Kaiser fully established himself in Berlin, although by now he had left Expressionism behind. The topicality of the social themes in his Expressionist dramas led to a spate of Kaiser productions all over Germany.

The critical reception of Kaiser's Expressionist plays was not as uniform or as straightforward as is sometimes assumed nowadays. With hindsight, there is always the dangerous temptation to see historical events in a neat, but simplistic, sequence of cause and effect. Schürer writes of the Frankfurt premiere of *Die Bürger von Calais*: "the



audience quickly took up his [Kaiser's] call for a new heroism in the service of peace. The premiere was a spectacular success, and overnight Kaiser's fame spread throughout Germany."<sup>1 2 4</sup> However, the total picture was less clear-cut – the overall public and critical reception was much more complex and problematic. Public reactions to this play varied greatly – in Berlin, Legband's production failed to hold the spectators' attention while the Düsseldorf production received rousing applause from its capacity audience. Often, the critical response was far from rapturous. Some critics had difficulties understanding *Die Bürger von Calais*, there were objections to its political implications and one critic dismissed it because he did not even consider it an Expressionist play. Indeed, the critical reception of Kaiser's major Expressionist dramas ranged widely from Kasimir Edschmid, who received Kaiser's Expressionist works with open arms, to Alfred Kerr, who made little effort to understand Kaiser. In Halberstadt, Kaiser could be hailed as a socialist; in Vienna, the sincerity of his social convictions could be questioned. Critics approached his works with traditional criteria, with a closed mind, with prejudices and, on very rare occasions, with a mind open to the innovations of Expressionism.

At times, the critics were hindered in a true evaluation of Kaiser's Expressionist dramas by factors out of their control. Directors were confused as to what was the

-----  
<sup>1 2 4</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 19.



appropriate style for this new drama. Actors, not used to Kaiser's language, had difficulties presenting Expressionist diction effectively and also had problems with the depersonalised nature of Expressionist acting, often tending to flesh out Kaiser's skeletal abstractions in the traditional realistic manner. At times, theatres could not cope with the radical demands of Kaiser's plays which not only introduced new ideas but also required a new style of acting and new stage designs. Indeed, on occasions, Kaiser seemed to be fighting an uphill battle, not just against traditional critics and audiences but also against traditional directors and actors.

Of the six dramas discussed in this chapter, *Die Koralie* was more important in its historical context than it might appear today. As a recently written work and as Kaiser's third premiere of a major Expressionist play in 1917, it confirmed to the contemporary critics Kaiser's complete commitment to the new Expressionist drama. By the time *Hölle Weg Erde* and *Gas II* were premiered, disillusion was setting in with regard to Expressionism and Georg Kaiser. Critics had become bored with Expressionist themes and were no longer convinced by techniques which they had praised earlier. With these works, Kaiser did not appear to have fulfilled his initial promise; Expressionism now seemed at a dead-end. Both plays were regarded as too radical, as too extreme, as merely the unacceptable face of Expressionism.





## C. The Discovery of Kaiser's Early Dramas after his Breakthrough as an Expressionist: 1917-21

### Introduction

Kaiser's breakthrough as an Expressionist in the provinces in 1917 aroused an interest in those plays which he had written before 1917. At last, publishers were willing, in the light of Kaiser's success, to bring out editions of works which had remained unpublished for years. Now for the first time, *Die Versuchung* (written in 1909-10) and *Die Sorina* (written in 1909) were published (both, Berlin: S. Fischer, 1917). Kaiser, too, was not slow to turn this sudden popularity to his advantage, taking the opportunity to revise older versions of his early works in order to publish them in new editions as new, improved versions of an older product. *Rektor Kleist* (written in 1903 and published privately in 1914) was rewritten in 1918 and the new version published the same year (Berlin: S. Fischer); *Claudius* (written in 1910-11) was rewritten and published with two other one-act plays, *Friedrich und Anna* and *Juana*, in 1918 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer).

Inevitably, this discovery of Kaiser's early works and their increased availability led to a spate of Kaiser performances. From 1917-21, nine newly discovered early



works (*Die Sorina*, *Die Versuchung*, *Der Zentaur*, *Rektor Kleist*, *Das Frauenopfer*, *Claudius*, *Friedrich und Anna*, *Europa* and *Die jüdische Witwe*), which had all had a first version written before 1917, were premiered. Unlike the six avantgarde Expressionist plays also premiered during this period, these early works were more traditional in terms of style and content. They displayed a wide range of genres – from "Komödie", "Tragödie", "Tragikomödie" to "Einakter" and even a "Spiel und Tanz". In addition to the Expressionist dramas and the early works, the period 1917–21 also saw the premieres of three newly written works (works first written after 1916): *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, *Juana* and *Der gerettete Alkibiades*.

### *Die Sorina*

Writing in 1917, after the recent banning of *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, *Der Zentaur* and *Die jüdische Witwe*, Kaiser described *Die Sorina* as having been written in response to his censorship problems:

Was das Stück *Die Sorina* anbetrifft, so ist es eigentlich ein Ventil, das sich der Dichter gegen die Zensur verschafft. [...]  
 Sie werden ermessen, wie erbittert ich bin.  
 Nur die Schreibung der lustigen *Sorina* hat meine Stimmung gerettet.  
 Und wer meine Zensurverbote kennt, wird das Stück richtig verstehen: es ist die mögliche Rache, die ich am Zensor nehme.'

However, if Huder's information is correct that *Die Sorina*

---

<sup>1</sup>Kaiser, "Ein Stosseufzer" (1917), in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 543.





was written in 1909 and was not revised before being published in 1917 (Berlin: S. Fischer), then Kaiser's remarks here, which imply that he had written *Die Sorina* only recently in reaction to his problems with the censor, do not seem totally accurate.<sup>2</sup> One suspects that Kaiser was taking advantage of his censorship problems in order to make an early work seem more topical and more socially relevant than was originally intended when it was first written.

It is true that at the centre of *Die Sorina* is a police inspector who takes great delight in using his authority to ban plays in the local theatre for selfish reasons and that Kaiser's drama criticises the abuse of police power. However, this early work of Kaiser's is not a hard-hitting, uncompromisingly aggressive satire on censorship in Germany. Kaiser plays safe by setting his "Komödie in drei Akten" in a provincial Russian town. Also, the tone and style of the drama are much closer to farce than to social satire. In many respects, all we have is a traditional three-act comedy. Schürer dismisses the play as a "drawn-out Naturalistic comedy", which he found inferior to the usual standards of Kaiser's work:

One would hardly suspect Kaiser to be the author of this play, which, although some of the characters and situations are comical, is simply too verbose and tedious to hold the attention of the audience

-----

<sup>2</sup>Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 872. Schürer is very vague about the dating of *Die Sorina*, saying that it was "written sometime between 1910 and 1917, although Kaiser might actually have dashed off the *Sorina* around 1917 as he states in his 'Orientation'" (Kaiser, p. 41). Cf. Hans Knudsen (138), who remarks that, although *Die Sorina* had only just been published, it had in fact been written much earlier.



for long. The opening scene is much too long, and, on the whole, the characters are not clearly delineated and too weak to carry the play.<sup>3</sup>

1917 witnessed the premieres not only of three Expressionist plays (*Die Bürger von Calais*, *Von morgens bis mitternachts* and *Die Koralie*) but also of three newly discovered early works (*Die Sorina*, *Die Versuchung* and *Der Zentaur*). *Die Sorina* was the first of Kaiser's plays to be premiered in Berlin (6.3.1917). Viktor Barnowsky directed this production at the Lessing-Theater, which starred Ilka Grüning as Mastridia and Traute Carlsen in the title role. Friedrich Düsel (58), reviewing the 1918 Berlin production of *Die Koralie*, was surprised that only *Die Sorina*, which he considered a peripheral work in Kaiser's "oeuvre", and none of the other major plays had been produced previously in Berlin. He thought that it had been staged merely because such depictions of Russian provincialism appealed to the German sense of humour. Jacobsohn (133) considered *Die Sorina* Kaiser's weakest play and thought that Barssukoff was such an unsympathetic, repulsive character that no German audience would draw the implication that Kaiser, through this corrupt Russian police-inspector, was really attacking the German censors.

Indeed, Kaiser's contemporaries in Berlin failed to draw the same implications regarding *Die Sorina* as the modern critic Schürer did with regard to Barin's play *Der Kindermord* which he described as "a thinly veiled parable on

-----  
<sup>3</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 41.





censorship under Wilhelm II".<sup>4</sup> The Russian setting completely undermined Kaiser's attack on German censorship because the Berlin critics were unable to relate exaggerated characters like Barssukoff and the events which take place in this provincial Russian town to their own situation in Germany. Düsel (134) considered a character like the police-inspector only possible in Russia and Julius Knopf (137) thought that the town where the action is set could only exist in Russia. Düsel was disappointed that the Lessing-Theater should have chosen to introduce Kaiser in Berlin with such an insignificant play, especially when he was aware that Kaiser had written other much better and deeper works. Knopf could not understand Kaiser's success in the provinces unless his other plays were far more intelligent and far wittier than *Die Sorina*.

Kaiser's text was dismissed by Düsel and Ernst Heilborn (135)<sup>5</sup> as a weak imitation of Wedekind. For Knopf, an excellent idea for a comedy had been ruined by Kaiser's lack of imagination and wit. Although Kaiser had tried to present a satire on censorship, the end result was more modest, the comedy degenerating to the level of farce. Jacobsohn

-----  
<sup>4</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 41. Knudsen reports that Kaiser's original title for the comedy was *Der Kindermord*, which he had to change, because of problems with the censor, to *Die Sorina*.

<sup>5</sup>Ernst Heilborn (1867-c.1940) was the Berlin theatre critic for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the most important provincial newspaper. From 1910, he was also the "Herausgeber" of *Das literarische Echo* which Schlawe describes as a neutral/conservative magazine. In 1912, it had a circulation of 3,600. See Rühle, p. 1166 and Schlawe, I, 47-49 and II, 22-24.





complained that the ending was too predictable and that the play seemed to run out of momentum about half-way through as the humour started to lose its effect. Knopf, too, was dissatisfied by the ending, finding the last act poor and boring. Although he considered the ending rather contrived, Hans Knudsen (138) was more favourably inclined towards Kaiser's work. He praised its skilful structure, its strong characterisation and its fresh, witty dialogue.

Barnowsky's presentation of Barssukoff's room, which made good use of gaudy colours, was praised for its visual humour (137). The highpoint of the production was Ilka Grüning's grotesque performance as Barssukoff's wife, Mastridia (137, 138). Jacobsohn praised Grüning for making an unattractive character amusing and sympathetic. The weakness of the production was that Barssukoff was not presented in a similar manner and that there was no attempt to make this character less disagreeable. He felt that Kaiser's play failed because the police inspector was so unpleasant that he was not funny – a deficiency in the text which the stage production should have alleviated. This premiere, which aroused only sparse applause (137), was the first of several unsuccessful productions for Kaiser in Berlin before his triumph with *Gas I* at the Volksbühne in 1919.

In Munich, L. G. Oberlaender (139), writing in 1918, agreed with Knopf that Kaiser's play was closer to farce than to satire. Earlier, when reporting on the Berlin



premiere, Oberlaender (136) had remarked that Kaiser's comedy lacked the deeper significance of satire. Despite his desire for revenge on the censors, Kaiser had not been able, through the figure of Barssukoff, to really come to terms with the problem of censorship (139). Oberlaender now felt that Kaiser was terribly over-estimated as a dramatist. Unfortunately, Feuchtwanger's production at the Volkstheater, which tried to emphasize the literary aspects of *Die Sorina*, destroyed, through its slow tempo, what humour there was in the work.

As in Berlin, Kaiser's play was dismissed in Stuttgart as one of his weakest dramas (141), as a light "Nebenarbeit" (140). The critic for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (141) thought that, if anyone else apart from Kaiser had written this undistinguished comedy, it would have been ignored because of its insignificance. He also made the point, which had been made elsewhere, that the Russian setting neutralised the attack on German censorship and concluded that what had started out as a satire had ended as a "Schwank von krampfhafter Lustigkeit". This critic was unhappy with the character of Barssukoff, which he considered problematic and uninteresting. Ferdinand Skuhra's pleasant production at the Deutsches Theater (1919) tended to tone down the bite of Kaiser's dialogue and humour (141). The reviewer for the *Stuttgarter Neues Tageblatt* (140) would have liked a more grotesque production and, like Oberlaender, believed that the play needed to be presented at a fast tempo. However,





despite such criticism, *Die Sorina* was well attended and warmly applauded in Stuttgart.

### *Die Versuchung*

Although *Die Versuchung*, "Eine Tragödie unter jungen Leuten aus dem Ende des vorigen Jahrhunderts in fünf Akten", had been written in 1909-10,<sup>6</sup> it was only published in 1917, first as *Die Muttergottes* and then as *Die Versuchung*. This is one of the least convincing of Kaiser's early works. It displays a complete lack of originality; its themes are a poor imitation of the social problems presented in the dramas of Naturalism; its characters and plot are weak and unbelievable. Kenworthy quite rightly comments that this drama "in the naturalistic convention [...] gives the impression rather of an exercise in dramatic construction than of a convincing and compelling drama."<sup>7</sup> Schürer writes that "the play is solidly constructed but does not hold the attention of the reader."<sup>8</sup>

Once more, Kaiser was plagued by problems with the censor. According to Schürer, after the text had been

-----  
<sup>6</sup>Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 873. Again, Schürer is not very specific, this time with regard to the dating of *Die Versuchung*. At first, he says that it was written "around 1910" (*Kaiser*, p. 39) but then later he states that it was written "sometime between 1910 and 1917" (*Kaiser*, p. 41). Kaiser's reference in 1917 to his "jüngst vollendeten Bühnendichtung" *Die Muttergottes* ("Vorwort zu *Die Muttergottes*," 1917, in *Kaiser, Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 543) does not tally with Huder's dates.

<sup>7</sup>Kenworthy, p. 107.

<sup>8</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 40.



banned, Kaiser merely changed the title from *Die Muttergottes* to *Die Versuchung* and the play reappeared without any textual changes.<sup>9</sup> A proposed performance of *Die Muttergottes* at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus was banned in 1917 and Kaiser, writing in 1917, anticipated that the attempts to stage *Die Muttergottes* at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin would likewise be frustrated by the censor.<sup>10</sup> Eventually, *Die Muttergottes* was allowed to be premiered as *Die Versuchung* on 31.5.1917 in Hamburg, where there were no censors. Hans Franck was perplexed by the inconsistencies of the censors from region to region:

Wenn dem düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus die Aufführung von Georg Kaisers *Von morgens bis mitternachts* und des gleichen Autors *Die Muttergottes* von der Zensur verboten wird, so mag es ja – obwohl ich sie nicht erdenken kann – immerhin Gründe geben, die dieses Verbot im Interesse der öffentlichen Ordnung rechtfertigen. Wenn aber, nachdem in dem zensurfreien Hamburg und in dem von einem wagemutigeren Zensor betreuten München *Die Muttergottes* und *Von morgens bis mitternachts* ohne irgendwelche Gefährdung der öffentlichen Ruhe und der privaten Sittlichkeit der Hamburger und der Münchner gespielt worden sind, dieses Verbot aufrecht erhalten wird, weil die Stücke 'für Düsseldorf' nicht geeignet seien, so wird damit den Düsseldorfern ein behördliches Zeugnis ausgestellt, dass sie sich – da es sie tiefer als andere Bürger ihres Landes einreicht – höchst energisch verbitten sollten.<sup>11</sup>

*Die Versuchung* was poorly received by the critics when it was premiered at the Thalia-Theater in Hamburg. This problematic work with its erotic themes did not confirm to

<sup>9</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup>Kaiser, "Ein Stosseufzer" (1917), in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 543. I could find no evidence of this production having taken place, so presumably it was banned.

<sup>11</sup>Hans Franck, "Der Kampf ums Theater," 1.9.1917, *Das literarische Echo*, 19 (1916–17), 1431–32.





the reviewer from the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* (143) the common contemporary view that Kaiser was the new hope of German drama. Its message and plot were not exactly clear; its characters were indecisive and vaguely drawn. The reviewer for the *Hamburger Nachrichten* (144)<sup>12</sup> was ashamed for the writer of such a dreadful play which was over-influenced by Nietzsche and Gerhart Hauptmann. In particular, Karla was an absolutely monstrous character. L. G. Oberlaender (142) criticised the drama's unclear, confused ideas and described the original title *Die Muttergottes* as "irreführend und geschmacklos". Frä. Bré was unable to win the audience's undivided sympathy for Karla; the production only aroused slight applause and the spectators seemed disappointed (143).

When *Die Versuchung* was performed at the Schauspielhaus in Cologne (1919), the critical reaction was again hostile. W. Stöppler (145) categorically denounced Kaiser's tragedy from the point-of-view of Christian morality and was extremely annoyed by the allusions to the Virgin Birth. In the light of such objections, it is easy to understand why a play which so easily provoked the wrath of religious puritans was banned by the censors. Forced applause greeted Georg Kiesau's moderately attended production.

-----  
<sup>12</sup>C. A. P. is probably Carl Anton Piper who, from 1911, wrote for the "deutsch-nationalen" *Hamburger Nachrichten*. See Rühle, pp. 1173-74.





## *Der Zentaur*

*Der Zentaur*, which was first written in 1906, was typical of Kaiser's early dramas in that it was rewritten many times and was published in several versions, not always with the same title. "Fassung 3" was the first version of the text to be published, appearing in three editions: 1) *Der Zentaur*, "Komödie in fünf Akten" (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1916); 2) *Der Zentaur*, "Lustspiel in fünf Aufzügen" (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1918), and 3) *Konstantin Strobels (Der Zentaur)*, "Lustspiel in fünf Aufzügen" (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer, 1920). Later, the play was revised and now appeared as *Margarine*, "Lustspiel in vier Akten". "Fassung 5" was published under its new title by Kiepenheuer (Potsdam, 1925) and "Fassung 6" in Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. W. Huder, Vol. I (Berlin: Propyläen, 1971), pp. 251-300.

This comedy of Kaiser's was, like many of Kaiser's early works, not noted for its originality and is described accurately by Kenworthy as an "attack on conventional bourgeois morality [...] in the manner of Sternheim".<sup>13</sup> As with *Die Versuchung*, Kaiser's subject-matter was guaranteed to offend bourgeois tastes. Kaiser satirises the concept of "Pflicht" and the way it is applied by his pedantic protagonist, the school-teacher Konstantin Strobels, who, in order to satisfy the terms of a will, must make Judith, his wife-to-be, pregnant in the first year of marriage. However, because he is not sure of his capabilities in this respect,

---

<sup>13</sup>Kenworthy, p. 12.



he first decides to test his masculinity on a maid. As a result of her pregnancy, he loses his job and his bride since he is considered a disgrace to respectable society – the endings of the various versions differ. The grotesque story of the death of Strobels' father, who fell into the machinery at the factory where he worked and was processed into a block of margarine, was also certain to offend those who believed in the theatre as a place of moral improvement. Even to a critic in 1971, the subject matter still seemed unpleasant and unacceptable. Schürer writes of the revised version *Margarine*: "it is no improvement. The idea presented is still revolting and offending to taste. The humor is again rather coarse and often obscene."<sup>14</sup> It is therefore no surprise to learn that *Der Zentaur* was banned in Cologne.<sup>15</sup>

*Der Zentaur* was eventually premiered as a "Groteskes Lustspiel in fünf Aufzügen" at the Schauspielhaus in Frankfurt/M. (23.10.1917). This production, directed by Gustav Hartung, was the first of two Kaiser premieres in the same week in Frankfurt, *Die Koralle* being premiered four days later (27.10.1917) at the Neues Theater. Diebold (147) was surprised that Kaiser, who had made his breakthrough less than a year previously in Frankfurt with *Die Bürger von Calais* (29.1.1917), was now the star of the new Frankfurt season. However, he complained that the sudden, disorderly appearance of Kaiser's early and later works was confusing

-----  
<sup>14</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 71.

<sup>15</sup>See Kaiser, "Ein Stosseufzer" (1917), in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 543.





and made a clear view of Kaiser's development very difficult. Because of textual differences, it would seem that the text which was used for this premiere was an unpublished, earlier version than the first published version ("Fassung 3"). The ending of this stage version, as described by Diebold and Dohse (148) in their reviews, differed from that of the first published version.'<sup>6</sup>

Although Strobel had disgraced himself as the father of an illegitimate child, an extra clause in the grandmother's will, which stated that she wanted Judith to marry a man "der einer grossen Torheit fähig ist", enabled the Vierkants to overcome their misgivings concerning this act of impropriety on the part of their prospective son-in-law and allowed the lovers, Judith and Strobel, to be reunited (148). This reconciliation of the lovers was a typical, traditional happy ending for a comedy. Diebold found this conventional ending rather banal. Although he praised the comedy's basic idea, he thought that five acts were too excessive and would have preferred a more compact three-act version. He liked the satire of the early acts but felt that *Der Zentaur* compared unfavourably to *Die Koralle*, lacking the latter's symbolical depth and power. For Dohse, Kaiser's

-----  
<sup>6</sup>According to Huder, the version premiered in Frankfurt was "Fassung 3" which had been published in 1916 – Kaiser, *Werke*, VI, 878. In a letter to Fritz Stiedry (1.6.1917), Kaiser remarked that he had rewritten *Der Zentaur* and that he had had the first edition recalled – see *Briefe*, p. 120 and p. 1153. However, the first edition which I managed to borrow from the University of Illinois (Urbana) and the other two editions of "Fassung 3" all have a different ending to that of the premiered version.



extreme comedy, which spared no target in its search for comic effect and which poked fun at love, marriage, piety, morality and even death, threatened, in many ways, to transcend the boundaries of good taste — especially in the description of the death of Strobel's father. Because of Kaiser's almost frightening lack of respect, Dohse could well see many spectators being unable to detect the deeper meaning behind Kaiser's work and being disgusted by the play's content, which insulted conventional notions of morality and respectability. He believed that this comedy needed to be produced in a non-realistic, puppet-like style and was full of praise for the acting. However, the audience appeared bemused by Kaiser's drama, there was some hissing and the applause did not seem sincere (148). Looking back in 1918 at this production, Dohse (27) wrote that the comedy's over-grotesque style aroused much public dissent.

When Kaiser's play was first performed in Munich at the Schauspielhaus in 1919, the title had now been changed to *Konstantin Strobel*, "Lustspiel in 5 Akten". Oberlaender (149) reported that this was a new version of the play and, from the descriptions of the plot in the reviews, this version would appear to correspond to "Fassung 3". This version has the following differences from the premiered version: there is no conventional reconciliation between the "lovers", Strobel and Judith; Judith rejects Strobel after his "immoral" act and decides to marry instead Farbe, a widower with nine children; after assaulting Farbe in Act





IV, Strobél is rescued from poverty in Act V by the rich widow, Frau Siebeneicher, whose son Harald had been driven by Strobél's pedanticism as a school-master to an early grave and who wants to marry Strobél so that he can provide her with a replacement for her son. This ending is far less conventional and much more grotesque than the ending of the premiere.

Kenworthy<sup>17</sup> and Schürer<sup>18</sup> both misinterpret the final scene with the rich widow because they do not seem to be aware of the premiered version. They are correct in stating that the sudden appearance of the rich widow at the end of the play is loosely linked to the main action. However, this ending cannot be interpreted as "a traditional comedy-ending" (Kenworthy) or as "a happy ending" (Schürer). The ending of the Frankfurt premiere, where the lovers were reunited, was indeed a conventional happy ending. In

-----  
<sup>17</sup>Kenworthy writes of *Der Zentaur*: "The playwright would have done well to end here, with the discomfiture of his hero in the third act. But he has postulated: 'Pflicht -- in erschöpfender Durchführung -- grenzt wohl immer an Komik!' And so comedy it must be, even though this means attaching to a play that is tragic in tendency a traditional comedy-ending by a 'coup de théâtre' whose organic connection with the whole dramatic action is tenuous: Strobél is married by a rich widow [...]. Undoubtedly this ending dissipates some of the force of the comedy, which was further weakened in a later version under the banal title *Margarine*, in which Strobél is employed as an agent for a margarine concern before being rescued from poverty by his marriage with wealthy Frau Siebeneicher" (p. 13).

<sup>18</sup>Schürer, referring to the 1920 edition entitled *Konstantin Strobél (Der Zentaur)*, remarks: "Originally, the play probably consisted of four acts, but Kaiser added a happy ending: an immensely rich widow, whose only son Strobél had driven to death by his excessive pedantry in school, pays for his bail and marries him. [...] This loosely attached act severely mars the play's structural unity" (p. 71).





contrast, Strobel's final triumph and the tastelessness of his marriage to a widow whose son he had driven to death did not dissipate the force of the comedy but intensified its grotesque nature. The humour of the ending is black and unpleasant but it is in keeping with the overall tone of a play which contained many elements offensive to bourgeois tastes and which easily aroused the moral indignation of Kaiser's contemporaries.<sup>1</sup> By introducing the rich widow, Kaiser made the tone of his comedy more consistent. Whereas the traditional happy ending contrasted with the prevailing tastelessness of *Der Zentaur* and weakened its comic effect, the new version offered a final grotesque twist which was more in keeping with the unsettling, anti-bourgeois mood of the play as a whole and which sharpened the bite of its satire.

After viewing Kaiser's drama, Oberlaender could well understand its problems with the censors. Although he found the opening moments amusing, the comic effect soon wore off. Indeed, the description of the death of Strobel's father was repulsive and annoying. Oberlaender felt that Kaiser was mocking his audience with such a work, which seemed only to promote bad taste. A second Munich critic (150) reported that Kaiser's play only made him furious and upset. After three acts, the bitter humour became unbearable. In particular, the simple-minded Strobel was just too implausible. Although he felt that the comedy had some great

-----  
<sup>1</sup> See reviews nos. 148, 149, 150, 152 and 159.



scenes, the critic for the *Neue Badische Landeszeitung* (151), considered the plot too slight to sustain five long acts. Also, Kaiser still needed to become more original — this comedy revealed once again his dependence on Sternheim. Otto Nebelthau's grotesque production reinforced the "Sternheimstil" of Kaiser's text (150, 151). Rudolf Hoch in the title role was praised for his comic ability (149, 151). As in Frankfurt, the audience were not really won over by Kaiser's text and there was a mixture of applause and dissent (149, 150).

*Konstantin Strobels* was produced again in Munich the following year (9.1.1920) at the Schauspielhaus. The director was still Otto Nebelthau and Rudolf Hoch starred once more as the protagonist. The text was yet another "Neueinstudierung", this time a "Lustspiel in vier Aufzügen". Kaiser appears to have heeded those critics (147, 151) who had complained that his comedy in five acts was too drawn-out in condensing his play into four acts. The critic for the rightwing *Völkischer Beobachter* (152), who was disgusted by the constant preoccupation with sex in recent comedies, seeing this as confirmation of a prevailing intellectual poverty, complained that this sexual subject-matter demonstrated "die undeutsche Abstammung des Verfassers". Kaiser's plot, setting and the character of Strobels were all described as having been inspired by Sternheim (153). Nebelthau's excellent production and Hoch's fine performance as Strobels were praised (152, 153).





However, despite the high standard of acting, the comedy was unable to evoke any noble emotions in the spectators (152).

*Konstantin Strobels*, in its four-act version, was performed the same year (1920) for the first time in Nuremberg at the Intimes Theater. Rudolf Hoch, on loan from Munich, repeated his presentation of Kaiser's protagonist, although now the director was Albert Martens. The critic for the *Nordbayerische Zeitung* (154) reported that Kaiser had changed the conventional happy ending of the premiere, where Strobels and Judith were reunited, because this was too "spiessbürgerlich". He was not sure whether the old ending or the new version with the rich widow was more successful. At least the revised ending was original and much more grotesque, although some might consider it unacceptable. Again, Hoch's performance was praised (154, 155).

Kaiser's comedy reappeared on the German stage on 4.9.1925 in yet another version, this time retitled *Margarine*, a "Lustspiel in vier Akten".<sup>20</sup> The premiere of this version at the Berlin Komödienhaus was directed by Ralph Arthur Roberts, who also played Strobels. This was the opening production of Barnowsky's second theatre in Berlin – the Komödienhaus. In order to reinforce the significance of

-----

<sup>20</sup>This was "Fassung 5", published in 1925 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). "Fassung 6", the final version of the comedy, was written in 1926. Acts IV and V of the five-act "Fassung 3" had by now been condensed into one fourth act – Judith's impending marriage to Farbe, Strobels's assault on Farbe and Strobels's rescue by the rich widow, Frau Siebeneicher, were retained but Strobels's long monologue in Act V was cut. In contrast to "Fassung 5", Strobels did not become a margarine agent in this last edition.



the title, Kaiser made Strobels, after he had been dismissed as a teacher, take over his father's job as a margarine agent before his rescue by the rich widow (156). Fechter (157) felt cheated by this premiere because the new title had led him to believe that he was going to see a new Kaiser comedy. He was, therefore, very disappointed when he discovered that this was merely a rewritten version of an older play, *Der Zentaur*. However, Fechter could see from this early work how Kaiser had improved in recent years as a dramatist. His works had become more enjoyable and his themes and characters were no longer so crude.

Again, the influence of Sternheim was noted, especially in the mockery of the petty bourgeoisie (156). Faktor (156) thought that the only distinctive Kaiser features were the comedy's tempo and the story of the death of Strobels' father. Falk (158), who did not consider Strobels a particularly original figure, felt that Kaiser had been thinking of Sternheim when he created this character. Fechter, tired of the ever-recurring mockery of philistinism, complained that this theme was now dated and had little relevance. The new title *Margarine* was for him no improvement and was as inappropriate to the drama's content as the original title *Der Zentaur* had been. The comedy's ending still did not satisfy everyone. Strobels' sudden salvation through the rich widow was denounced as terrible "Kolportage" (160); his disgrace and subsequent marriage to the rich widow were not at all amusing (162). Faktor was an





exception in that he did not consider the ending banal.

In order to emphasize the title visually, Hermann Krehan's witty stage design resembled a giant packet of margarine (156, 158). The highpoint of the production was Ralph Arthur Roberts' stylised, caricatured performance as Strobél. Falk considered this one of the most comic figures for many seasons. What was remarkable about Roberts' performance was the effective use he made of a nervous cough to express his embarrassment. He used this cough with great variety and, each time he used it, he was able to intensify the comic effect (158, 161). He spoke in a mixture of Saxon and Berlin dialects with many pauses (157). Unfortunately, Roberts did not achieve the same degree of success as a director as he did as an actor. There were complaints that the other parts had been poorly distributed and that the cast was wrong (158, 160). On account of the weak cast, Roberts was unable to produce the play consistently in the style which was normally used for Sternheim's comedies (156). Julius E. Herrmann (Vierkant) was not really funny (156, 161) and Claire Waldoff (Frau Vierkant) seemed totally out of place. She was completely monotonous and bland (161); Falk thought that she was more suited to cabaret than to the theatre. Roberts' production, which did not try to tone down the crude aspects of Kaiser's text, was also under-rehearsed. Without the prompter, the performance would have been disastrous (157). Faktor, too, thought that the production had been prepared too hastily and that some





improvements were still needed. Yet, despite the weak cast and their lack of familiarity with the text, the Berlin premiere of *Margarine* was a good success, mainly because of Roberts' outstanding performance as the protagonist (156). The audience greeted the production with lively applause (160).

Although there were critics like Falk who found the story of the death of Strobels father very funny, even in 1925 Kaiser's comedy was still able to arouse the indignation of less open-minded critics. *Margarine* was denounced as a scurrilous, shoddily constructed work with vulgar humour, clichéd situations and distorted caricatures (159). In the eyes of this reviewer, a writer like Kaiser, whose heartless, brutal work was distinguished by its lack of moral qualities, had no right to mock the German bourgeoisie and the German family. True humour needed "Herzenswärme" and a work of art could not consist merely of smutty ideas. He concluded that Viktor Barnowsky should have opened his new theatre with a more worthy and respectable drama.

### *Rektor Kleist*

1918 saw seven Kaiser plays premiered, four early works (*Rektor Kleist*, *Das Frauenopfer*, *Claudius*, *Friedrich und Anna*), two new works (*Juana*, *Der Brand im Opernhaus*) and one Expressionist drama (*Gas I*). Although this was not his first



work to be written, Kaiser remarked in 1917:

"Fünfundzwanzigjährig das erste Werk – eine Tragikomödie von Krankheit und Verlangen: *Rektor Kleist*."<sup>21</sup> Kenworthy thought that Kaiser had made this comment because he considered his career as a dramatist as only really beginning with this work.<sup>22</sup> A first version of *Rektor Kleist*, which had been written in 1903, was published privately in 1914 (Weimar: R. Wagner Sohn). Kaiser revised the play in 1918 and this version was published the same year as a "Tragikomödie in vier Akten" (Berlin: S. Fischer).

Steffens describes *Rektor Kleist* and *Der Fall des Schülers Vehgesack* as "den Schülertragödien und Vtermordstücken, dem Intellekthass des Expressionismus allzu typisch verhaftet."<sup>23</sup> However, *Rektor Kleist* has little in common with Expressionism. It is an early work, begun many years before Kaiser started on his first Expressionist dramas *Von morgens bis mitternachts* and *Die Bürger von Calais* in 1912. Kleist's final speech in the 1918 edition is indeed a fine example of Expressionist "Telegrammstil" but as Schürer points out, perceptively, this speech "is not found in the first version and was added by Kaiser during his revision of the play in 1918."<sup>24</sup> The style and themes of *Rektor Kleist* are more typical of his early works than of his Expressionist plays. School

-----  
<sup>21</sup> Kaiser, "Biographische Notiz" (Dec. 1917), in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 546.

<sup>22</sup> Kenworthy, p. xvii.

<sup>23</sup> Steffens, p. 87.

<sup>24</sup> Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 227, note 20.





settings, school teachers and other academic figures appear regularly in Kaiser's early dramas.<sup>25</sup> The contradiction of mind and body, of "Geist" and "Leben" (the central problem of *Rektor Kleist*, as represented by the deformed hunchback Kleist and the healthy gym teacher Kornmüller), was a problem which recurred constantly in Kaiser's early works.<sup>26</sup> The themes (Fehse's suicide; the school setting) are indebted most to Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen* (as Steffens acknowledges).

*Rektor Kleist* was premiered at the Neues Schauspielhaus, Königsberg on 26.1.1918, directed by the critic Julius Bab.<sup>27</sup> The local critics had many misgivings about Kaiser's text. Otto Hesse (165) thought that it was more appropriate to describe the drama as a tragedy rather than a tragicomedy. Hans Wyneken (164), too, did not consider it a true tragicomedy because it lacked humour. In contrast, Ludwig Goldstein (166), who would have preferred a character study written in the cheerful tone of the second

-----  
<sup>25</sup>Cf. *Der Fall des Schülers Vehgesack*, first written 1901-02; *Der Geist der Antike*, first written in 1905, and *Der Zentaur*.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. *Der Geist der Antike*, *Europa*, *Die jüdische Witwe* and *Der Zentaur* – the centaur with the head of a man and the body of an animal symbolises this division in man between his reason and instincts, between his mind and body.

<sup>27</sup>According to Huder, the version premiered was "Fassung 3", the 1918 edition (Berlin: S. Fischer) – Kaiser, *Werke*, VI, 880. Schürer says of this edition: "Thematically the guilt is distributed more evenly, since Fehse does *not* confess in his letter but asserts his innocence" (*Kaiser*, p. 67). However, in the 1918 edition which I have consulted (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1918) and according to the descriptions of the plot in the Königsberg reviews (cf. 163, 165), Fehse commits suicide and also confesses to a deed which he did not commit.



act, found the transition to tragedy rather sudden. The play seemed to suffer from a lack of focus. Its plot was complicated and unclear and the unity of the action was marred by the number of motifs which were introduced in the exposition (163, 165, 166). For Wyneken (164), the main weakness was the preponderance of themes which were only touched upon and not developed in the course of the drama. In particular, the motivation of the action (the ink stains) was too trivial and the consequences of this spilled ink were completely out of proportion to their cause. This was just too weak a subject-matter to hold the plot together (163, 164).

Wyneken found Fehse's tragedy far more interesting and of greater dramatic potential than the main plot — Kleist's tragic situation. Unfortunately, Fehse's fate was presented only sketchily, whereas the main Kleist plot, with its lack of psychological development, was allowed to dominate the action (164). Hesse also believed that Kleist's tragedy was over-shadowed by the Fehse subplot, which, in contrast, was not contrived and was a real tragedy. He even wanted to rename the play, by analogy to Kaiser's earlier school-drama, *Der Fall des Schülers Fehse*. Wyneken was disappointed because Kaiser had been unable to master his subject-matter and to exhaust its dramatic possibilities. The ending was unsatisfactory since Kaiser was incapable of thinking his ideas through to a convincing conclusion. Hesse was sceptical of Kaiser's attempt to attribute some of the





guilt for Fehse's death to Kornmüller and of Kaiser's efforts to justify Kleist's behaviour. For Goldstein, a rector like Kleist and the play's plot were too atypical to be considered representative. Hesse concluded that *Rektor Kleist* was inadequate as a drama and that it was nearer to a sketch than to a properly executed work. Yet, in comparison to other recent Kaiser plays, it appeared more theatrical, a fact which was proved by the powerful dramatic effects of Bab's production. Wyneken, too, was favourable towards Bab's production which made the premiere reasonably successful, despite the weaknesses of the text and an initially cool reception (163). Still, the public revealed through their laughter their lack of sympathy towards Kaiser's protagonist (165).

*Rektor Kleist* was performed for the first time in Nuremberg, at the Intimes Theater, in 1919. Again, the main motivation of the action (the ink stains) did not seem convincing. The critic for the *Nürnberger Zeitung* (168) found this motivation too contrived and insignificant in relation to its consequences. Likewise, the reviewer for the *Fränkischer Kurier* (167) wanted to rename the play *Sturm im Wasserglas mit tragischem Ausgang*. *Rektor Kleist* was not considered an Expressionist drama and, with its traditional features, it seemed a long way from the revolutionary form of *Die Koralie* and *Gas*. Only in the fourth act did Kaiser go beyond conventional drama. Here, Kleist's tormented complaints were described as an early example of





Expressionism in an otherwise normal work (168).

Unfortunately, the critic for the *Nürnberg Zeitung* was unaware that Kaiser had revised the text in 1918, adding passages of "Telegrammstil".<sup>28</sup> Although the first act was too long-winded, this critic found the play very interesting and was surprised that *Rektor Kleist* had been ignored by the German theatres. The public response was a mixture of astonishment and interest (168).

### *Das Frauenopfer*

*Das Frauenopfer*, a "Schauspiel in drei Akten", first written in 1915-16, was revised in 1918 and published the same year (Berlin: S. Fischer). It was translated into French in 1922. The play conforms strictly to the three unities and has a very tightly constructed plot. There is a relatively small cast and several of the characters are named. *Das Frauenopfer* is set in France during the Hundred Days, although it is not really an historical play. We are concerned mainly with the relationship between Lavalette and Die Gräfin; this significant moment of history merely serves as a background to their relationship. Kaiser's work is best described as a psychological drama which is inward-looking and concerned with human relationships rather than with broad social and historical problems. *Das Frauenopfer* marks a new departure for Kaiser compared to his other early works

---

<sup>28</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 227, note 20.



started before 1917. Whereas these other early works tend to be over-dependent on dramatic forerunners, *Das Frauenopfer* is much more original. Schürer considers this the first of a group of nine "Frauenstücke", which are distinguished by a female protagonist, their closed form, their small cast, their concern with inner reality and with the contradiction between "Schein" and "Sein".<sup>29</sup> For Kenworthy, *Das Frauenopfer* was part of a group of plays "modelled on the French 'pièce de chambre'". These plays were usually set in France and were noted for their closed form, their precisely defined plots, their swiftly moving action, their small casts and their treatment of the problem of subjective truth.<sup>30</sup>

*Das Frauenopfer*, however, also has several features in common with Kaiser's Expressionist plays. "Telegrammstil" is used, especially during moments of great emotional disturbance; the set is both realistic and symbolic (the tapestry symbolises the theme of flight) and there is the theme of the subjective validity of truth which is also found in works like *Die Koralie*. Kaiser was free in his treatment of history. Napoleon did introduce Lavalette to his future wife and the description of the escape from prison is accurate. However, the historical Lavalette did

---

<sup>29</sup>Schürer lists his nine "Frauenstücke" as follows: *Das Frauenopfer*, *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, *Der Gärtner von Toulouse*, *Oktoberfest*, *Hellseherei*, *Adrienne Ambrossat*, *Agnete*, *Rosamunde Floris* and *Alain und Elise* – Kaiser, pp. 140–53.

<sup>30</sup>Kenworthy includes in this group: *Das Frauenopfer*, *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, *Die Flucht nach Venedig*, *Der Präsident*, *Oktoberfest* and *Der Gärtner von Toulouse*, p. 190.





not escape until after the Hundred Days (23.12.1815) and the historical Gräfin died in prison in 1830.<sup>31</sup> Although *Das Frauenopfer* is very tautly structured, the plot at times appears contrived and the behaviour of the main characters does not seem plausible. Kenworthy did not find the drama "entirely convincing":

technically the play is good: every conventional unity is preserved, it has tension and movement – but it does not come to life. Perhaps this is because Kaiser injects into his historical material more psychological complication than it can well bear, and then develops this to a logical conclusion which is more rational than life itself.<sup>32</sup>

Once more, Kaiser ran into censorship problems, this time for sexual reasons, mainly because of the Gräfin's descriptions of how she was raped frequently by the soldiers in prison (Acts II and III). At first, *Das Frauenopfer* was banned by the censor in Düsseldorf. Eventually, it was allowed to be premiered there at the Schauspielhaus on 23.3.1918 in an abridged version. This was the second Kaiser play to be presented in Düsseldorf, performances of *Die Muttergottes* and *Von morgens bis mitternachts* having been banned (169).

The response of the local critics was basically negative. Karl Röttger (170) found the action and character motivation unclear and improbable. The reviewer for the *Düsseldorfer Generalanzeiger* (169) was dissatisfied by Kaiser's treatment of his theme in this demanding work. The

-----  
<sup>31</sup> See Schürer, *Kaiser*, pp. 236–37, note 5 and Kenworthy, p. 110, note 1.

<sup>32</sup> Kenworthy, p. 110.



characters, despite their period costumes, were really modern figures and the historical atmosphere was drawn only very weakly. Heinz Stolz (171), who was sceptical of the Berlin critics now praising Kaiser, condemned Kaiser's ugly, brutal drama. However, he misinterpreted the figure of the Gräfin. Whereas, in Kaiser's text, she lies about her "ambitions" as a means of inciting Lavalette to escape, Stolz took these ambitions seriously. He thought that this was her true nature and denounced her as "eine Hyänin des Ehrgeizes". In another review, he complained that Kaiser's characters were just like animals and that Kaiser had not presented love but sexual hunger, wild passions and decadence.<sup>33</sup>

Knut Ström's beautiful, elegant set in Empire style offered a stark contrast to the wretchedness of the plot.<sup>34</sup> There was some applause for Gustav Lindemann's production, which was performed eleven times (169). *Das Frauenopfer* returned to the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus on 3.5.1919 for a further four performances.

The reasons for the problems which this play had with the censors become understandable when one reads reviews like the one in the *Mainzer Journal* (172), after *Das Frauenopfer* had been performed at the Mainz Stadttheater (1919). Although this reviewer admired Kaiser's technical and structural ability, he thought that the Stadttheater, by producing dramas like *Das Frauenopfer*, which were nothing

<sup>33</sup>Heinz Stolz, *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 25.3.1918.

<sup>34</sup>Linke, p. 110.



more than unhealthily erotic "Verfallskunst", had deviated completely from its social function – to improve and educate public taste, the bourgeois virtue of "Bildung". Kaiser's detailed examination of his sexual theme was especially insulting to the women in the audience! *Das Frauenopfer* was considered an Expressionist work because of its preoccupation with inner reality, "das Seelische", the "Erlebniswelt" as opposed to the interest of the Impressionists in the "Erscheinungswelt", in evoking external reality. Wendhausen's Expressionist production presented the main characters in the appropriate "visionary" style. The public applauded the actors, although there was also some slight dissent towards this "new style" of drama.

When *Das Frauenopfer* was performed the same year in Cologne, at the Kammerspiele im Schauspielhaus, similar objections were raised. Dr. Walter Schmits (173) did not consider such a combination of idealised martyrdom, crude theatricality and a wallowing in sick, sexual titillation the heights of modern drama. He complained that the subject-matter was so repulsive that he was unable to identify with the events on stage. Because the Gräfin remained too distant, the play was unable to arouse any feelings of moral greatness in the spectator. Schmits was unconvinced by Kaiser's erotic explanation of why Lavalette allowed his wife to take his place in prison; he could hardly think of anything more controversial than the Gräfin's cleverly intensified description of how she was





raped there repeatedly. Still, Georg Kiesau's satisfactory production, with its period costumes and the peaceful, elegiac mood of its setting, was well applauded.<sup>35</sup>

When *Das Frauenopfer* was presented for the first time in Stettin, at the Bellevuetheater (1920), it was a somewhat tamer version, the director Alexander Runge having toned down and abridged Kaiser's text. The critic for the *Generalanzeiger* (174) did not see this as a typical Expressionist work like *Gas* because *Das Frauenopfer* was more tangible than *Gas* with its completely depersonalised figures and language. Kaiser's poetic power and artistic skill were able to assuage any doubts arising from the drama's unpleasant, potentially horrifying subject-matter (the multiple rape of the Gräfin). He thought that Kaiser was still in a state of development and had yet to fulfill his promise as a writer.

Fritz Wendhausen, who had directed *Das Frauenopfer* in Mainz in 1919, produced the play again in 1920, this time at the Mannheim Nationaltheater. By now, some critics were beginning to understand that this was not really an Expressionist drama. Dr. Ernst Leopold Stahl (175)<sup>36</sup> realised that it was a long way from the contemporary social problems of major Expressionist works like *Die Koralle*, *Gas* and *Von morgens bis mitternachts*. Instead, it was, like *Der*

-----  
<sup>35</sup>F. B., *Kölner Tageblatt*, 28.9.1919, in *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 7, p. 165.

<sup>36</sup>Ernst Leopold Stahl (1882-1949) was the theatre critic for the *Neue Badische Landeszeitung* in Mannheim from 1914-23. See Rühle, p. 1176.



*Brand im Opernhaus*, one of Kaiser's "romantisierenden Liebesstücke". Stahl did not agree with a popular view of Kaiser at this time that he was a hurried, over-prodigious writer, who churned out plays before they had a chance to mature. He thought that the real reason for the sudden proliferation of Kaiser plays was the unusual length of time it took for Kaiser to get his plays staged. As a result, many dramas which had been completed before his breakthrough were only being discovered now.

Stahl remarked that the ending of *Das Frauenopfer* was similar to that of *Die Bürger von Calais* (the victory of self-sacrifice over conventional military heroism).<sup>37</sup> Although he was impressed by the play's masterly structure and tense atmosphere, he felt that Landauer's praise of its moral content had led him to overestimate its literary qualities.<sup>38</sup> Stahl thought that *Das Frauenopfer* was too contrived, too intellectual and too lacking in feeling for a "Liebesdrama". Although he praised Kaiser's dialogue, Fritz Droop (176) also complained that the intellectual elements were too dominant and did not consider this play of the same standard as *Die Bürger von Calais*.

-----  
<sup>37</sup>Cf. Kenworthy, who saw in the Gräfin's selfless devotion "a considerable element of Kaiser's New Humanity" (p. 110) and Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 142.

<sup>38</sup>In an article in the *Berliner Tageblatt* (22.8.1918), Gustav Landauer had defended *Das Frauenopfer* against contemporary critics who had "misinterpreted" its content. He had concluded that the play presented, through the Gräfin, the victory of devotion over brute force, of the spirit of humanity over the "Welt des Mordens".





Wendhausen's fine production, with its atmospheric lighting effects and the theatre's best actors, was very well received by the Mannheim audience (176). Unfortunately, this successful production was performed in a half-empty theatre. Droop believed that the number of spectators would increase once word had circulated that the Gräfin appeared, in the third act, wearing only a night-dress.

1920 also witnessed the first performance of *Das Frauenopfer* in Essen, at the Stadttheater. The critic for the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (177) refused to share the views of those puritans who saw the play's eroticism as a desecration of art and as undermining public morality. Kaiser's eroticism was not insulting to the female spectators because the sexual themes were elevated to an intellectual sphere which was far removed from everyday life. He thought that the subtle, psychological treatment of these themes made them almost incomprehensible to the average theatregoer. However, he objected to *Das Frauenopfer* for different reasons. Kaiser was not an artist but a mere "Könner"; this intellectual play lacked feeling; apart from the Gräfin's final words, it had no poetic qualities. Still, he found the subject-matter interesting and could not criticise the play's structure, language and tempo. Because this reviewer saw the work as an Expressionist drama, he was disappointed that Donadt had not produced *Das Frauenopfer* in the Expressionist style. The acting was not Expressionist but "bürgerlich"; the sets were conventional; Baldermann was



inappropriate for his part as Lavalette. He concluded that the director and the actors had turned Kaiser's Expressionist drama into "ein bürgerliches Familienstück".

Two years later, on 28.3.1922, *Das Frauenopfer* appeared in a revised version at the Kiel Schauspielhaus.<sup>3</sup> Wilhelm Lobsien (178) thought that Kaiser would have done better to have let people forget this play rather than to revise it. The drama lacked life, the characters were contrived, the end result was three boring acts which came close to becoming laughable.

When *Das Frauenopfer* was performed for the first time in Leipzig at the Schauspielhaus (11.11.1922), again as in Kiel, it was presented in a new revised version (180). However, the critical reception was still very hostile. The critic for the *Kleine Chronik* (179) concluded that this was Kaiser's worst play. Although he was used to Kaiser's psychological complexity from his other plays, Dr. Egbert Delpy (181) found *Das Frauenopfer* a disappointment compared to plays like *Die Bürger von Calais*, *Gas* and *Die Koralle*. He did not think that trying to decipher the meaning of such an elusive work was worth the effort. Kaiser's play was extremely difficult to understand not only because of his confusing Expressionist language but also because the way in

-----  
<sup>3</sup> According to Huder, the version premiered on 23.3.1918 in Düsseldorf was "Fassung 2", written and published in 1918. Lobsien describes this Kiel production as the "Uraufführung" of a revised version of the play. This could have been the first performance of "Fassung 3", written in 1921 and published in 1922 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer) – Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 866.





which the plot was presented only hinted at events, leaving the spectator the hopeless task of trying to piece together what the play was all about (179). For Hans Georg Richter (180), following this revised version, with its even more refined dialogue, was not easy. The reviewer for the *Kleine Chronik*, who found the characters overcomplex and artificial, was especially unhappy with the figure of Lavalette. Lavalette's behaviour was too contradictory and extreme, he was too much of a weakling and too lacking in natural feeling. Such a figure was too impossible, too unconvincing to hold the play together. For this critic, the drama was too drawn-out and the action was more suited to one act than three. The implausible plot would have been acceptable for an opera, but for a "Schauspiel" it was unsatisfactory.

What is becoming apparent from the reviews of the various performances of Kaiser's play is that *Das Frauenopfer* was a problematic work not only for the critics but also for the directors and actors. Its mixture of Expressionist and non-Expressionist features only led to confusion. Indeed, contemporary critics reached opposing conclusions with regard to its style – some considered it an Expressionist work (172, 177) while others argued that it was not typical of Kaiser's Expressionist plays (174, 175). Directors also had to decide how to stage the work. Should they present it as a realistic, historical period piece, as an intense, visionary Expressionist drama, or should the





stylistic ambivalence of Kaiser's text be maintained and Kaiser's intense, psychologically complex "characters", with their "Telegrammstil", be made to contrast with the elegance of the historical setting?

This Leipzig production highlighted the problems which the director and the actors faced. The two protagonists were presented by Lina Carstens (Gräfin) and Franz Stein (Lavalette) in opposing acting styles. Stein was true to Expressionist acting in depicting Lavalette as a grotesque marionette. He did not try to flesh out his part as a "Mensch" with human feeling but remained true to the rational, intellectual style of Kaiser's text (179, 180). Lina Carstens, in contrast, was full of feeling, a "Mensch"; her acting was simple, unaffected and warm (180). Her performance, which was considered superior to Stein's, was the highpoint of the evening (179, 180). Delpy felt that these contrasting styles of acting (Stein's nervous, contorted Expressionism and Carstens' monumental simplicity), although effective in their own right, tended to undermine each other when presented together. This was yet another feature which hindered a clear understanding of Kaiser's text. The play proved too demanding not only for the critics but also for part of the audience. Their hisses showed that they were unwilling to exercise their intellect in the effort to make sense of the work (180).

Georg Kiesau, who had directed the 1919 production of *Das Frauenopfer* in Cologne, was responsible for its first



performance in Dresden, at the Schauspielhaus (12.7.1923). Unfortunately, the Dresden critics were very antagonistic towards Kaiser's text. Once more, it was considered one of his worst plays (183). Felix Zimmermann (183) could understand, after seeing this play, why Kaiser was called the "Sudermann des Expressionismus". Likewise, Friedrich Kummer (182) remarked that Kaiser's work possessed the same mixture of sensationalism and eroticism usually found in Sudermann. He disliked the artificially created tension, the forced dialogue, which seemed inappropriate to the characters and their situations, and Lavalette's hysterical, brutal, cowardly behaviour. He was unconvinced by a work which was very appropriate for his own historical period in that it satisfied the contemporary delight in cruelty and sensationalism – contemporary tastes having been corrupted by the cinema. In particular, the description of the Gräfin's experiences in prison was repulsive and disgraceful. This desire for truth, which did not refrain from describing anything, however unpleasant, and the resultant sensationalism were, for Kummer, the major shortcomings of many works and of contemporary life. Equally unfavourable was Zimmermann, who described Kaiser's drama as a poor opera text, lacking in moral greatness.

Although *Das Frauenopfer* had been performed frequently in the provinces, its first production in Berlin was not until 1929. This production, which starred Eleonora von Mendelssohn as the Gräfin and Anton Edthofer as Lavalette,





was directed by Eugen Robert at the Tribüne. It was a tremendous public success and the applause was unusually loud (186, 187, 189). Surprisingly, features of Kaiser's text which had been condemned earlier by the critics elsewhere were now praised. By 1929, the critics had matured and there were no more prudish moral objections to Kaiser's sexual themes. Indeed, the critic for *Der Montag Morgen* (193) was pleased to see a real drama of passion, which was a refreshing change from so much contemporary "künstlich besoffenen Zivilisationsdramatik". In contrast to all those reviewers who had found Kaiser's play incomprehensible, the critic for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (186) thought that *Das Frauenopfer* was much less complicated and much simpler than Kaiser's usual plays. He was full of respect for this work and considered it one of the most serious dramas to have been produced on the German stage for a long time.

Critics were grateful for a work which was well structured (187, 189, 191). In fact, now the play's intellectual aspects, its logical sequence of events and tight structure were all admired (192). The reviewer for the *Berliner Morgenpost* (188) saw the drama as containing Kaiser's best qualities – his dramatic power and the effective intensification of his theme. In particular, the confrontation between the Gräfin and Lavalette in the second act and the ending aroused the audience's applause. Ihering (197) praised the play's concise form and language, finding



this a pleasant change from the extravagance and lack of discipline all around. *Das Frauenopfer* was considered similar to *Der Brand im Opernhaus* and *Oktoberfest* with regard to its language, form and the detailed analysis of psychological problems (191); however, the action appeared more straightforward than that of *Oktoberfest* (186).

Kaiser's language still caused some problems for the actors. Eleonora von Mendelssohn, at times, lacked the necessary precision (185); Edthofer, who had difficulties coping with the unnatural, intense diction, lacked the required discipline and expressed himself too indistinctly (184, 185, 197). Although *Das Frauenopfer* was considered well worth performing (185) and "ein Schauspiel von Rang" (190), there were other critics who were less satisfied. It was not seen as one of Kaiser's most convincing works and Kaiser would not have been able to make his breakthrough as a major dramatic talent on the strength of this Expressionist play alone (184). Ihering believed that it would be best if this over-contrived drama were not produced any more.

### *Drei Einakter – Claudius; Friedrich und Anna; Juana*

The three one-act plays *Claudius*, *Friedrich und Anna* and *Juana* were published together in 1918 as *Drei Einakter* (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). *Claudius*, first written in 1910–11, was published privately as *La Fanciulla* and then revised in



1918. *Friedrich und Anna*, which was another early work (first written in 1910–11), was published privately as *Mona Lisa*; it was revised in 1913, published privately as *Monna Nanna* and then in 1918 as *Friedrich und Anna. Juana*, although a new work (written 1918), was not a new departure but was linked to the earlier works *Friedrich und Anna* (with regard to its theme and style) and *Das Frauenopfer* (by the theme of idealised female self-sacrifice).

All three one-act plays have a small cast and deal with the theme of sexual jealousy. Claudius is a de-idealised knight who fights not for noble reasons but because his sexual jealousy drives him to kill all potential rivals for his wife's affections. His frustrated wife, who is sexually aggressive like Judith in *Die jüdische Witwe*, seeks out her lovers amongst the lower classes. The play ends tragically with the triumph of jealousy and emotions over reason. Claudius kills his wife and sets out to burn down the houses of the poor. The ending of *Friedrich und Anna* is the complete opposite. Friedrich refuses to conform to traditional behaviour which would require him to fight a duel to protect his honour. Because his wife's lover made her happy, he forgives her and the play ends happily with a reconciliation. Reason and cool, platonic behaviour triumph over jealousy. The ending of *Juana* is similarly idealised. Juana, who has to choose between her present husband Jorge and her former husband Juan (he has returned suddenly after being presumed dead), sacrifices herself by committing





suicide. Friendship between men is more important than love; her death restores the friendship between Juan and Jorge, which had been threatened by their jealous desires for Juana. The trilogy shows a development from the eroticism and sexual jealousy of *Claudius* to an idealised triumph of the mind over baser instincts in the other two dramas. According to Schürer, these plays because of their style and mood were close to "the neo-Romantic school".<sup>40</sup> Kenworthy considered *Juana*, with its "commonplace" plot, the "least convincing" of the three plays in the trilogy;<sup>41</sup> Schürer dismissed Juana as "simply a mouthpiece for Kaiser's ideas" and found her final speech "unconvincing".<sup>42</sup>

The trilogy was premiered on 21.10.1918 at the Städtische Schauspiele, Baden-Baden and at the Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. Richard Dohse (199) could not really understand why the Neues Theater had billed the trilogy as a "Romantischen Abend". Although the stylised simplicity of the sets, the costumes and soft lighting conjured up something like a Romantic atmosphere, the content of the plays seemed realistic, provided allowances were made for Kaiser's typical use of symbolism and philosophy. Diebold (198) did not see this trilogy as casting any new light on Kaiser. Dohse was not completely convinced by the contrived

-----  
<sup>40</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 55. Kaiser had published *Claudius* and *Friedrich und Anna* earlier with Italian titles (*La Fanciulla*; *Monna Nanna*); the characters also had Italian names (Claudio, Federico, etc.) – see Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 53.

<sup>41</sup>Kenworthy, p. 23.

<sup>42</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 54.



moral and philosophical problems of these plays. The only compensatory features were the incisive dialectics and Kaiser's occasionally lyrical language. However, he was rather tired of such speculations on the relationships between men and women, which lacked any real dramatic power, and of such oversubtle interpretations of ethical concepts. Instead of such oracular wisdom, he longed for a tangible plot; instead of such artificial figures, he wanted real, living people. Diebold praised Kaiser's dialogue (especially in *Friedrich und Anna*) and considered *Juana*, because of its symmetry and language, the most dramatic of the three plays. Yet he was dissatisfied by their endings, by the lack of clarity to Kaiser's ideas and by the improbable characters. Disappointed, Diebold wondered when Kaiser would return to the heights of *Die Bürger von Calais*. The applause was respectful but not extravagant (199). *Juana* returned to the Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. the following year (1919), along with Eduard Stucken's tragicomedy *Die Gesellschaft des Abbé Chateaufort* and Hermann Burte's *Donna Joes*. These three one-act plays were presented under the collective title "Liebestragödien".<sup>43</sup>

1919 also saw the first performance of the trilogy at the Kleines Haus of the Württembergisches Landestheater (directed by W. v. Scholz). The critic for the *Neues Tagblatt* (201) was glad that the Württembergisches Landestheater was now presenting modern drama, even if this

---

<sup>43</sup>See *Die schöne Literatur*, 20 (1919), 139.





trilogy was not the most problematic example of Kaiser's work. These three plays contained several features typical of Kaiser – the coldly sparkling language, his tense situations and the sharp, dialectical treatment of his problems. This critic was favourably impressed by the trilogy. In particular, he admired *Friedrich und Anna*, which revealed Kaiser at his most intelligent and civilised, and *Juana* for the new twist given an old theme – Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* (1864) motif. He also thought that, in *Juana*, Kaiser had turned Eulenberg's subject-matter in *Belinde* (1913) into a glorification of friendship. The reviewer for the *Schwäbischer Merkur* (200) described *Friedrich und Anna* as evoking the delicate, gentle atmosphere of a Rococo painting – in contrast to the gloomy, mediaeval, ballad-like tone of *Claudius*. In *Friedrich und Anna*, the attractive setting and Friedrich's Rococo charm compensated for the unusual behaviour of the protagonists. Finding *Juana* interesting and stimulating, he praised its dramatic qualities and its tension. There was especially warm applause for *Juana* (200).

The trilogy was performed again the same year (16.9.1919), for the first time in Düsseldorf, at the Schauspielhaus. This time it was presented under the collective title "Die Milchstrasse".<sup>44</sup>

-----  
<sup>44</sup>Presumably, this title was inspired by Juana's speech: "Erlebte ich nicht so das Wunder eurer Freundschaft? Schwillt nicht mein Lob der Freundschaft nach den Sternen auf? Brennt nicht die Höhe reicher entzündet? Schiebt sich nicht Stern an Stern zu neuer Figur – zur Ewigkeit erglänzend – das Zwillingsgestirn der Freunde? Drängt sich



The Düsseldorf critics were divided in their reactions to Kaiser's trilogy, which was performed ten times. The reviewer for the *Düsseldorfer Zeitung* (204), who did not find the title "Die Milchstrasse" particularly helpful, could not relate Juana's reference to the "milchigen Strasse" to the trilogy as a whole and had difficulty trying to discover the central theme which linked the plays. Another critic complained that the three plays had been put together at random (203). Many features of the trilogy proved disappointing. The behaviour of Claudius' wife (an aristocratic female granting sexual favours, voluntarily, to many of the poor) was considered improbable (202) and unbelievably naive (203); Claudius' one-dimensional character, distinguished only by his brutality, was implausible (203); this play was just too crude and repulsive (204). The ending of *Friedrich und Anna*, where Friedrich forgives his wife's lover, was also unconvincing (202, 205). Although this play was more subtle than *Claudius*, it was lacking in external action (204). Juana's behaviour and her platonic logic seemed improbable, the development of the plot here over-rational (203) and the predictable ending unsatisfactory (204). These plays were too abstract (203), this "reine Gedanken-Expressionismus" becoming tiresome during the course of the evening (202).

-----  
 "(cont'd)nicht milchige Strasse heran, die das Paar lustwandeln soll?" (*Juana*, in Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, V [Berlin: Propyläen, 1972], 720).





However, not all the criticism was negative. Although he found the plays uneven and contrived, the critic for the *Düsseldorfer Zeitung* did admit that they contained some poetic moments, especially in the speeches of the female characters. The reviewer for the *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt* (202) considered *Juana* the best of the three plays. Despite the fact that the theme (the return of a "dead" husband) was not original, Kaiser had presented his subject-matter with such artistic skill that for once his ideas had taken shape as characters of flesh and blood. Another Düsseldorf critic (205) saw *Juana* as the most theatrical of the three plays, praising the dramatic power of the dialogue between Juan and Jorge, although he found the ending anticlimactic and too sententious. Eugen Keller's production was excellent (205), the acting was very good (203) and Egon Wilden's colourful, atmospheric sets added life and visual appeal to Kaiser's trilogy (202).

The following year (15.2.1920) witnessed the first performance of *Juana* in Leipzig, where Kaiser's work by now had become well-known (206). Once more, similarities were observed between this play and *Enoch Arden* and *Belinde* (208). The critic for the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* (208) was pleasantly surprised that a feverish Expressionist like Kaiser had developed his subject matter to a climax so logically and without any digressions. The reviewer for the *Leipziger Zeitung* (209) praised the play's symmetry, especially in the final scene. Although F. Michael (206),





who described the play as a "Denk-Spiel", was impressed by the beauty of the final scene (the men holding hands across Juana's dead body), by its powerful language and gestures, he still considered it contrived. He questioned whether a woman would speak of love in this way and was not convinced that her death would be able to restore the friendship between Juan and Jorge. The reviewer for the *Freie Presse* (207), who was not won over by the play's logic, was sceptical that a woman could love two men so equally. At least he saw this as a refined, harmonious work with a certain nobility of language and form. Dr. Alwin Kronacher's excellent production at the Neues Theater, with its subdued diction, colours and movements, stayed true to the delicate balance, to the harmonious symmetry of Kaiser's text (207, 209). The simple set contributed to the atmosphere of calm and nobility (206, 207). Lively applause confirmed the success of this production (206, 209). On 11.12.1921, a second play from the trilogy, *Friedrich und Anna*, was performed in Leipzig (at the Kleines Theater), as part of an "Einakterabend" together with Strindberg's *Vorm Tode* and Wedekind's *Tod und Teufel*.<sup>4 5</sup>

*Juana* was presented again in 1920, this time together with Strindberg's one-act "Naturalistisches Trauerspiel" *Fräulein Julie*. This first production of *Juana* in Hamburg took place at the Kammerspiele. The critic for the *Altonaer Nachrichten* (211) was surprised that, for once, Kaiser had

-----  
<sup>4 5</sup>Erich Michael, *Die schöne Literatur*, 23 (1922), 47.



written a work which did not treat any contemporary social problems, even though the Enoch Arden theme had become topical because of the war. Instead, this was a timeless drama with a message which was universally valid. The reviewer for the *Neue Hamburger Zeitung* (210)<sup>46</sup> found the evening interesting because he understood *Juana* to be an Expressionist work and therefore wanted to examine the stylistic differences between Kaiser's Expressionist play and Strindberg's Naturalist work. However, his subsequent remarks on the differences between Expressionism and Naturalism are not really valid since the initial premise that *Juana* was an exemplary Expressionist work is incorrect. Like F. Michael (206) in Leipzig, the critic for the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* (213) was dissatisfied by the ending and suspected that a dead Juana would have stood between the "friends" in the same way as when she was alive. The usual points were made here as elsewhere. The symmetrical action, the concise treatment of the subject-matter and the beautiful, concentrated language were praised (211, 212, 213). However, Kaiser's "Denklust" failed to arouse human interest because his ideas lacked life and his finished product was too contrived (211, 212).

Erich Engel's production, with its dark, subdued colours, lasted little more than 20 minutes (211). The reviewer for the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* would have preferred

-----  
<sup>46</sup>H. W. F. is probably H. W. Fischer, who was a critic for the *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*. As a dramatist, he was known for his play *Motor*.





a more atmospheric and more concentrated production. He criticised Engel's attempts to emphasize the meaning behind every harmless remark and the lyrical features of the production which diminished its effectiveness. However, he still considered Engel one of the major artistic talents working in Hamburg at this time. Anni Mewes as Juana was stylised, non-realistic and inwardly intense; she made Juana seem believable (210, 211, 212). Günther Hadank as Jorge was equally stylised and inwardly pure (210, 212). In contrast, Günther Bobrik's Juan was more lifelike, almost Naturalistic in his attempt to flesh out his character (211, 212). Although the critic for the *Hamburger Echo* complained that the unity of the evening was not helped by such sharply contrasting works as Kaiser's and Strindberg's, nevertheless both plays received loud applause (210, 212).

Kaiser published *Juana* as an "Oper in einem Aufzug" (with music by Max Ettinger) in 1925. This opera was premiered at the Stadttheater (Intimes Theater), Nuremberg, on 7.1.1925. It was also performed for the first time in Munich, at the Nationaltheater, the same year. *Juana* was presented together with Puccini's *Giovanni Schicchi* which was considered the main work of the evening (214). In contrast to those other Kaiser plays, which had aroused public and critical indignation on account of their "tastelessness" and "eroticism", this trilogy (especially *Friedrich und Anna* and *Juana*) had appeared, up to now, pleasant, light and inoffensive. However, the version of



*Juana* as an opera was not to the liking of the critic for the *Völkischer Beobachter* (215). He did not think that *Giovanni Schicchi* deserved the fate of being presented on the same bill as *Juana* and complained that the works were completely unsuited to each other. He was sceptical of Ettinger's modern music which had been influenced by Schönberg. Ettinger, who lived in Munich, had merely composed "eine erotisierende hilflose Musik". The best aspect of this problematic experiment was its instrumentation. The reviewer for the *Allgemeine Rundschau* (214) queried the plausibility of Juana's penultimate speech. He also considered Juan's question to the dying Juana — whether she loved both men equally — extremely tactless and improbable in such a distressing situation. Still, he was more favourable towards Ettinger's music, praising its beauty and the tasteful use of the orchestra. He liked the music of the opening scene and thought that it was more effective when expressing emotions rather than during the dramatic scenes. The critic for the *Völkischer Beobachter* had to concede that the performance was better than the work itself, that the acting and singing were first-rate and that the stage design was full of atmosphere. The talented cast ensured that this version of *Juana* as an opera was well received in Munich (214).





## Der Brand im Opernhaus

*Der Brand im Opernhaus*, "Ein Nachtstück in drei Aufzügen", was first written in 1917-18, was revised in 1918 and published in 1919 (Berlin: S. Fischer). Although a recently written drama, it did not mark a new departure but had many similarities to the earlier *Das Frauenopfer*. Like *Das Frauenopfer*, it conformed to the three unities, had a leading female character and a tightly structured plot. Despite its French historical setting (the burning of the Paris opera house in 1763), it was again primarily a psychological drama, concerned with the relationship between Sylvette and the Herr von \*\*\*.<sup>47</sup> The themes are also linked, in particular the theme of idealised female self-sacrifice (Sylvette sacrifices herself as Alcestis so that her Admetus, Herr von \*\*\*, can continue to live) and the problem of the subjectivity of truth. There is the same mixture of Expressionist and non-Expressionist features. Once more, "Telegrammstil" is used during moments of emotional intensity and the preoccupation with inner reality recurs. In addition, it is possible to interpret the protagonists as going through a process of regeneration. The Herr von \*\*\*, after marrying, has given up his former debauched ways and

-----  
<sup>47</sup>Schürer writes of this character: "The fact that he is simply designated by three asterisks may indicate that he no longer has a name because he lives completely withdrawn from society" (*Kaiser*, p. 142). However, it was common for writers around this time (1763) to preserve the anonymity of their aristocratic characters - cf. Gellert's *Das Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G...* (1747-48) or Kleist's *Die Marquise von O...* (1808). Perhaps Kaiser was just trying to be consistent with the practices of the historical period?





now lives ascetically, in seclusion from high society;<sup>48</sup> Sylvette, who has committed adultery with the Opernsänger and thus betrayed her husband's illusion of her as a woman of great purity, expiates her "wrongdoing" by sacrificing herself for her husband.<sup>49</sup> From Kaiser's own words, it is clear that he intended his protagonists to be understood as having been regenerated into "Neue Menschen". Sylvette's death allows her husband to live a purer existence.<sup>50</sup> Schürer, however, was not convinced by both processes of "regeneration". He did not see the Herr von \*\*\* as a "Neuer Mensch" because he was too extreme and cruel. Moreover, he

-----  
<sup>48</sup>The Herr von \*\*\*, referring to his marriage to a chaste orphan-girl, says: "Ich wurde wiedergeboren und lebe kräftiger an jedem neuen Morgen – mit meiner Frau! [...] Alles an mir ist verwandelt. Ich habe mich – mitten unter euch – meilenweit von euch entfernt. [...] Die Luft weht hier rein und frisch – kein fauler Geruch steigt hier herein" (Kaiser, *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, I, 721–22).

<sup>49</sup>Steffens, who found the Herr von \*\*\* an improbable figure, considered Sylvette's development a typical Expressionist regeneration: "Von 'Sühne' können wir eigentlich nicht sprechen, denn sie ist an Menschlichkeit dem Mann überlegen. Ihr Tod dokumentiert im Grunde nur ihre höhere Menschlichkeit, ihren Durchbruch, der an die typisch expressionistischen 'Wandlungen' denken lässt, an die 'Erneuerung' [...]" (p. 96).

<sup>50</sup>Kaiser writes: "Der Zufall des Brandes im Opernhaus bringt dem Herrn \*\*\* die notwendigen Erschütterungen: zu seiner letzten Läuterung war noch ein Erlebnis nötig von der Wucht des freien Todes Sylvettes. Die letzten Schlacken fallen von ihm ab –: er ist Mensch geworden – mit allen Verpflichtungen, die reines Menschentum auferlegt. Zu ihm kann keine Versuchung von aussen mehr dringen – das neue Leben hat mit dem Sterben Sylvettes für ihn begonnen und bleibt unverlierbar. Auch Sylvette geht den Weg zur Läuterung: aus der Unbewusstheit ihrer Menschlichkeit und solcher Würde erhebt sie sich [...] zur gewussten Verpflichtung gegen sich selbst – und wird selbst Mensch, der dem hohen Zweck der Reinigung vom gebunden Alltäglichen zur Ahnung des Ewigen freudig dient" (letter, 28.8.1918, in *Briefe*, p. 149).



was unable to detect any nobility in Sylvette's self-sacrifice, which he decribed as "basically worthless":<sup>51</sup>

That she [Sylvette] follows her husband's suggestion and commits suicide proves her sense of sacrifice but also reveals a lack of self-confidence in the face of his egoism and his control over her. Her death has no value. The 'ethical' idea of the play does not lead to a new man but to death and madness. *Der Brand im Opernhaus* is a 'night play' in more than one respect.<sup>52</sup>

As in *Das Frauenopfer*, the over-logical development of the action becomes contrived (especially the character motivation and the ring subplot). There is also a similar shocking quality – the debauched stories of *Der alte Herr*, the macabre preoccupation with dead bodies and the touches of black humour. However, the fire effects (the bells, the shouting, the flames of light) make *Der Brand im Opernhaus* very theatrical. For Schürer, this was another of Kaiser's "Frauenstücke"; for Kenworthy, it belonged to the group modelled on the French "pièce de chambre". *Der Brand im Opernhaus* was translated into French (1923),<sup>53</sup> into Czech (1925) and into English (1927). Steffens, who did not notice the play's mixture of styles, merely dismissed it as "ein

-----  
<sup>51</sup> Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 237, note 11.

<sup>52</sup> Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 143.

<sup>53</sup> According to an unidentified clipping in the GKC, there were complaints about the poor translation, when *Der Brand im Opernhaus* was performed for the first time in Paris at the Oeuvre theatre. The public reaction to this play, which the critics labelled "ultraexpressionistisch", was very cool. A critic (242), reviewing the 1925 Berlin production of the play, reported that this unsuccessful French production marked the first presentation of a German play in Paris after the First World War.





schlechtes expressionistisches Stück".<sup>54</sup>

*Der Brand im Opernhaus* was premiered on 16.11.1918 at the Kammerspiele, Hamburg and at the Stadttheater (Intimes Haus), Nuremberg.<sup>55</sup> Erich Ziegel's production, which starred Mirjam Horwitz and Fritz Kortner in the leading roles, was well applauded in Hamburg. Greter (216) praised Kaiser's language and the flowing action. The lack of intervals also increased the unity of the action. Although individual aspects of the play seemed unlikely, Greter found the action as a whole plausible. The following year (1919), Erich Ziegel and Mirjam Horwitz presented *Der Brand im Opernhaus* as a "Gastspiel" at the Kammerspiele in Munich.<sup>56</sup>

The first Nuremberg premiere of a Kaiser play provoked opposing reactions from the local critics. On the one hand, Theodor Hampe (217) thought that *Der Brand im Opernhaus* belonged to the latest dramatic style, which was distinguished by "Zersetzung und Auflösung". A well-structured plot, logical characters and real human beings of flesh and blood were not to be expected from such a "dramatischen Zersetzungsprodukt". On the other hand, Dr. H. Deinhardt (218) did not see this as an ultra-modern work but wondered whether it was not really an early

-----  
<sup>54</sup>Steffens, p. 96.

<sup>55</sup>See Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 866. Kenworthy (p. 202), Schürer (*Kaiser*, p. 15) and some reviews (219, 222) also refer to another premiere on the same day at the Königliches Schauspielhaus, Berlin. However, I could find no direct evidence of this production.

<sup>56</sup>L. G. Oberlaender, *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 25, 21.6.1919, p. 355.



"Anfängerstudie". He considered the subject-matter (the Alcestis theme) and the dramatic style dated. Also, a character like Sylvette was a long way from the interests of the more modern German dramatists. A third Nuremberg critic (219) was surprised by Kaiser's remarkable combination of themes, by the contrast between the traditional Alcestis motif and the debauched yet graceful French Rococo setting. The final result was an uncertain vacillation between the frivolous historical milieu and the work's ethical content. The end product was a peculiar mixture "von echt gallischem Plauderstück und jüngster Bühnenkunst".

For Hampe, Kaiser's Expressionist preoccupation with inner reality had produced a work which was interesting and tasteful to a certain extent, mainly because of its subject-matter. The setting, the occasional tense situation, the well-drawn figure of Der alte Herr and the sparkling language managed to evoke the atmosphere of this doomed, debauched pre-revolutionary aristocratic society. Despite Kaiser's originality and artistic skill, despite the play's suspense and intense atmosphere, the conclusion was reached that, all in all, it was just too contrived (221). Although it was an intelligent, well-structured work, it did not seem totally successful (224). Once more, one of Kaiser's plays was condemned as "eine kunstvoll konstruierte Kopfarbeit" (220). The major complaints concerned the ending and the character of Sylvette. Sylvette was too contradictory a character, starting out, under the influence of Wedekind, as





a Lulu figure only to change suddenly, in the third act, into an Alcestis. Such an unconvincing transition was attacked as the weakest moment in the play (222). This implausible ending was dismissed as "Vorkriegskunst" (221);<sup>57</sup> it was unsatisfactory because it completely contradicted traditional behaviour (226).

Dr. Liebscher was praised for bringing this premiere to Nuremberg (222). Under his guidance, the Stadttheater seemed to be improving artistically (224, 225). With the end of the war and the social changes after the abdication of the monarchy, censorship was easing. The debauched tales of *Der alte Herr*, which previously would probably have caused Kaiser's play to be banned or at least abridged, were now allowed (219). Various aspects of Liebscher's production suffered criticism. The actors, who seemed confused regarding the drama's style (219), had real problems with Kaiser's language (220). Much of the subtlety of his language was lost because they spoke too hastily and unclearly (217). For one reviewer (221), the language and plot were too subtle for a stage presentation, especially when the text was made even more incomprehensible by the quiet diction of the actors.

-----  
<sup>57</sup>This critic thought that Sylvette, whom he describes as a "Dirne", committed suicide as an act of revenge on her husband because he had insulted her (cf. also Delpy, review 232). Deinhardt (218), in contrast to the modern critic Steffens, who denied that there was any atonement (p. 96), interpreted the ending as Sylvette's act of atonement for her adultery — rather than as an act of love or sacrifice or revenge.





Sylvette was a problematic character to present on stage since an actress needed a wide range of ability to express her development from an adulteress, who is just glad to be alive after the fire, to an idealised Alcestis figure, who is willing to sacrifice her life for her husband. Unfortunately, Fräulein Hagenbruch did not possess the required talent. She lacked the temperament of a "Dirne" and the idealism of an Alcestis (219). Her Sylvette was merely declamatory, she was unbelievable and lacked life (221). One critic felt that she did not do justice to the role because she was too sentimental and was not aggressive enough (222). Hellmuth Pfund presented *Der alte Herr* in a sharp characterisation, although he too lacked life (219, 220). A first-class production, with better actors, especially in the leading female role, might have made the play more effective. This premiere suffered because the characters remained too abstract and schematic (224).<sup>58</sup> Apart from the ending, there were other unsatisfactory aspects to the production. The technical effects were weak, especially the tame fire, and the setting did not seem suitable for aristocratic orgies (219, 220). At least the production managed to maintain a fast tempo (222).

Just as the Nuremberg critics disagreed as to whether *Der Brand im Opernhaus* was a modern drama or not, so too did their reports of the public reaction vary. There were those

-----  
<sup>58</sup>In contrast, one critic (225) was an exception in that he wanted Liebscher's production to emphasize more the puppet-like nature of the "characters".



who described this premiere as a great, deserved public success (222, 223, 225). The capacity audience appeared deeply moved by the powerful events on stage and their loud applause was unending (223, 225). For others, this production was merely an "Achtungserfolg" and the public seemed unable to follow the complexities of Kaiser's plot (224, 226). According to another reviewer (219), the audience applauded the play warmly, even though they could not understand its meaning. The more negatively disposed reported that the applause of the large audience was weak and that the faces of the spectators betrayed their disappointment and bewilderment towards such an unclear, demanding work (221). There was some applause but most members of the public went home shaking their heads at such an abstract drama (220).

Ten days after the Hamburg and Nuremberg premieres, a new version of *Der Brand im Opernhaus* was premiered at the Kleines Schauspielhaus in Charlottenburg (26.11.1918), directed by Georg Kaiser himself.<sup>59</sup> Emil Faktor (28), in his review of the Berlin production of *Von morgens bis mitternachts* on 31.1.1919, referred to this Charlottenburg production, remarking that Kaiser's play was poorly received. Like the performances of *Die Sorina* (1917), *Die Koralle* (1918) and *Von morgens bis mitternachts* (1919), this production of *Der Brand im Opernhaus* was another failure for Kaiser in Berlin, before his breakthrough there with *Gas I*

---

<sup>59</sup>This was "Fassung 3". The version premiered in Hamburg and Nuremberg had been "Fassung 2".





(25.2.1919). The Berlin critics were very hostile towards *Der Brand im Opernhaus*. Jacobsohn (227) complained that the play was incomprehensible – "eine unfassbare Geistreichigkeit". Three acts lacking in psychology or, just as bad, with an over-subtle psychology were too much and the play needed to be compressed into one act. He felt that it was a dreadful torment to spend an entire evening watching such an enigmatic work. Hermann Kienzl (228) was no more favourable. This play was one of Kaiser's disasters, one of his "Missgeburten". The content was too shrouded in mystery and the language too obscure. As a result, it was difficult to understand not only for the average theatregoers but even for the experts. Sylvette's character development was as unconvincing in Berlin as it had been in Nuremberg. Kienzl could not work out the reasons for her suicide. Even worse, Johanna Terwin's performance, which did not prepare the final transformation in any way, was misleading and only made the ending more confusing. Hans Knudsen (229) complained that Kaiser's production did not make the psychological motivation of the characters clear enough, although Kaiser was hampered by the fact that he did not have the best possible actors at his disposal. For Kienzl, the technical aspects of the production were satisfactory but the casting could have been better. There was a mixture of applause and dissent (228).

The following year (1919), *Der Brand im Opernhaus* was presented at the Kammerspiele des Deutschen Volkstheaters in



Vienna. The play was criticised because the action developed mechanically, not organically and because the characters were not real living people. Only the opening scenes had any human warmth (230). Dr. Bernhard Reich's production attempted successfully to save the play by presenting it, with many cuts, at a fast pace. The three acts were performed without any intervals and flew by in one and a half hours. Again, the character of Sylvette caused problems. Liselotte Denner did not possess the subtlety to present Sylvette's changes of character – from "Waisenmädchen" to "Dirne" to Alcestis (230); her unclear diction hindered greatly the clarity of the action (231). The Opernsänger, who had been presented ironically in Berlin, was turned here into a sympathetic lover. One critic in Vienna (230) thought that it was more biting and more typical of Kaiser for this character to be presented grotesquely as vain and unsympathetic. To portray him as a sincere lover provided an unnecessary sentimental excuse for Sylvette's behaviour. Carl Götz depicted Der alte Herr as a mysterious "Märchenfigur". The gloomy ballad-like atmosphere of Kaiser's play reminded the critic for the *Neues Wiener Journal* (231) of the fantasy world of E. T. A. Hoffmann. This production in Vienna was a great success.<sup>60</sup>

When *Der Brand im Opernhaus* was performed for the first time in Leipzig at the Schauspielhaus (1920), the local critics disliked the play and the production intensely. Dr.

---

<sup>60</sup>A. G., *Arbeiterzeitung* (Vienna), 3.12.1919, in *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 17, p. 460.





Egbert Delpy (232) described the production as one of the most unsatisfactory evenings which he had ever spent in the Schauspielhaus. He thought that this over-contrived, over-intellectual play, which lacked feeling and was not as appealing as works like *Die Koralle*, *Gas* and *Die Bürger von Calais*, should have been left unperformed. Hans Natonek (233) was not convinced by Kaiser's plot. It did not seem likely that a wife would betray her husband so soon after her wedding, especially in the aristocratic society of Paris in 1763. Delpy was sceptical of the Herr von \*\*\*'s overnight transformation from his playboy lifestyle to asceticism.

Otto Stoeckel's production was denounced as wretched and embarrassing (234). The bare setting gave no hint of the sensuality of the Rococo period, there was no atmosphere and the fire was a tame affair (232, 233, 235). Stoeckel, the actor, who played the Herr von \*\*\*, was no better than Stoeckel the ineffectual director. Not an ecstatic actor, his Herr von \*\*\* was just "ein erschütterter Bürger" (235). Failing to come to terms with the range of Kaiser's character — from playboy to ascetic to lover —, he merely presented a "starre Bourgeois-Marionette" (232). Natonek complained that Stoeckel was not suited to Expressionist language and that his acting in the third act was completely ineffective (233). He also thought that as a director Stoeckel should have made much more of Blanche Dergan's Sylvette (234). She overacted and her intense, ecstatic performance could, at times, have been more restrained (233,





235). For Delpy, Blanche Dergan was a good Lulu-character but he could not detect any traces of an Alcestis or an orphan-girl. At least of the actors she seemed the most suited to the play. There was some applause mingled with whistles of dissent (232, 233).

The first performance of *Der Brand im Opernhaus* in Düsseldorf, at the Schauspielhaus (30.9.1921), represented another unsuccessful production of Kaiser's play. There was no applause from the large audience — only icy, embarrassed silence.<sup>61</sup> Franken (237) felt that Rolf von Lossow's production, which he described as a tiresome torment, only emphasized the play's weaknesses, especially with its inadequate acting in the main roles. The fire was wretched and the sets did not evoke a rococo atmosphere. He also considered *Der alte Herr* an impossible mixture of Expressionism and Rococo decadence. For the critic from the Düsseldorf *Freiheit* (236), the historical characters and the historical period, with its attempts to hide through epicureanism a decaying social order, had many similarities to his own period and the contemporary ruling class. He thought that Kaiser's play was too subtle and complex for the simple tastes of the working class. As a critic for a communist newspaper, it was not his job to distract the workers from class struggle through shallow bourgeois dramas. He wondered when the Schauspielhaus would present Hauptmann's *Die Weber* again. This production of *Der Brand im*

---

<sup>61</sup>G., *Düsseldorfer Zeitung*, 2.10.1921 and O. A. Sch., *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, 2.10.1921.



*Opernhaus* ran for eleven performances.

*Der Brand im Opernhaus* returned to Berlin in 1925. Unfortunately, the Berlin critics were still as hostile towards Kaiser's play as they had been in 1918. Fechter (238) concluded that this was one of his worst dramas, revealing all his bad points, and that, despite the skilful structure, it should not be performed any more. Kaiser was just experimenting with tragic situations. However, he did not do justice to his serious themes since he was unable to present realistic, psychologically convincing reactions to these situations. As a result, the action did not pulse with real life. At best, there were some moments of theatrical effectiveness but, on the whole, Kaiser's play lacked "Ernst und bewegtes Leben". Kurt Pinthus (239) dismissed *Der Brand im Opernhaus* as an "Übungsarbeit".<sup>62</sup> He wondered why this dated, insignificant experiment was being performed instead of Kaiser's other better and more topical dramas. Mysing (240) considered this drama a classic example of Kaiser's weaknesses – his ecstatic intensification of trivial plots, his overwrought language, his artificiality and lack of simplicity. For Norbert Falk (243), this contrived plot was best suited to an opera or ballet.

Kaiser's play, which had proved ineffective when produced earlier in Berlin and Paris, was no more successful

-----  
<sup>62</sup>Kurt Pinthus (1886–1975) was a critic for the Berlin *8 Uhr Abendblatt* along with Felix Hollaender. He also edited the famous anthology of Expressionist poetry *Menschheitsdämmerung*, first published in 1920 (Berlin: Rowohlt). See Rühle, p. 1173.





at the Staatstheater. Although the director Friedrich Neubauer tried his best to enliven and intensify the action through a fast tempo and cuts in the text, this only made the play appear even more contrived. The three acts were compressed into one and there were no intervals in the performance, which lasted one and a half hours (239). Emil Pirchan's stage design was gloomy and atmospheric, the fire was a technical "tour de force" (238, 239). Neubauer tried to bring out the physical aspects of the play with colour contrasts and sound effects (241). The production did not strive to reproduce the rococo atmosphere with complete historical accuracy. The costumes were not characteristic of 1763 and the non-period setting included three massive red chairs (240, 242, 243). Despite the many cuts and the fast tempo, the production had to struggle to achieve any tension, because the psychology of the action was too complicated and unclear (240). Fechter was unhappy that Neubauer had not done more to facilitate an understanding of Kaiser's difficult text. Because of the noise of the fire and because of the actors, who either whispered or roared, most scenes were unable to win over most of the spectators. Fritz Valk (Herr von \*\*), more of a "Sprecher" than a "Mensch", did not make his behaviour any more understandable through his unclear diction (238, 239, 242). Alexander Granach's alter Herr was criticised for being undaemonic and too crudely drawn (242, 243). Pinthus complained that, instead of presenting this character quietly, with



aristocratic distance, Granach transformed him, quite wrongly, into a loud, screeching, ill-mannered monster. Gerda Müller, as Sylvette, was unable to make her self-sacrifice convincing (243). The public response to this production was cool and there was some slight applause (238, 240, 243).

As with *Das Frauenopfer*, the mixture of Expressionist and non-Expressionist elements in *Der Brand im Opernhaus* caused problems for Kaiser's contemporaries. The critical reaction varied from Hampe (217), who saw the play as an up-to-date modern drama, to others like Deinhardt (218) and Pinthus (239), who considered it an early beginner's work, a dated experiment. Confusion prevailed as to whether the drama should be produced as a modern Expressionist work or as a realistic period piece. Even the actors were unsure how they should interpret Kaiser's "characters" (219). The reviewers at the premiere in Nuremberg, who complained that Fräulein Hagenbruch's Sylvette was unbelievable (221), that she and Pfund lacked life (220, 221) and that the characters were too abstract and schematic (224), seem to have been expecting a traditional, realistic production with fleshed out, life-like, psychologically convincing characters. Elsewhere, critics reached the opposite conclusion — that the characters should not be filled out and that realistic acting was inappropriate for such a work. The critic for *Der Neue Tag* wrote after the 1919 performance of *Der Brand im Opernhaus* in Vienna:





Es ist klar, dass die Darstellung eines solchen Werkes ungeheuer schwierig ist, da für den Schauspieler geradezu alle Gesetze auf den Kopf gestellt erscheinen; war es bisher seine Aufgabe gewesen, Menschen zu verkörpern, wird diesmal von ihm verlangt, ein Gespenst zu versinnbildlichen, Unmenschliches zu sein. Rückfall in die Natürlichkeit muss da als Todsünde gelten, Krampf ist Trumpf, und die Hysterie die Regentin des Abends.<sup>3</sup>

The first production of the play in Frankfurt/M., at the Schauspielhaus (1925), was criticised because it misunderstood the work in presenting it realistically:

Übrigens hat auch die Regie versagt. Diesen Nachtspek realistischer und überlaut auf die Bühne zu stellen, heißt ihn abwürgen; die Gespenster, die Kaiser hier beschworen hat, vertragen das grelle Licht der Scheinwerfer nicht und schreien vor allem auch nicht so, wie es hier der Fall war.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast, Paul Krohmann's production at the Bremen Schauspielhaus (1925) had an almost mystical, unrealistic atmosphere, the characters appeared ghostly and Doramaria Herwelly presented an intense, ecstatic, Expressionist Sylvette.<sup>5</sup>

Just as *Der Brand im Opernhaus* had been produced at a lively pace in Nuremberg, Vienna and Berlin (1925), Dr. Walter Schmits, at the Cologne Kammerspiele, thought that only a fast tempo could save such an unconvincing, contrived work:

Um den Zuschauer ob der vielen Unwahrscheinlichkeiten und Willkürlichkeiten nicht zur Besinnung kommen zu lassen, müssten sich die Vorgänge sehr rasch abrollen. Das Tempo in den

---

<sup>3</sup>p. f., *Der Neue Tag* (Vienna), 3.12.1919, in *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 17, p. 460.

<sup>4</sup>anon., n.d., n.s., GKC.

<sup>5</sup>ko., *Weserzeitung* (Bremen), 10.6.1925.





Kammerspielen war viel zu gemütlich; von der Hast drängender Ereignisse war wenig zu verspüren.“

*Der Brand im Opernhaus* proved even more problematic than *Das Frauenopfer*. Not only was the mixture of styles confusing in both plays but in addition the characters of *Der Brand im Opernhaus* caused further difficulties. Kaiser's Sylvette was too demanding for many of the contemporary actresses, who lacked the subtlety and range to portray her changes of character. Fräulein Hagenbruch in Nuremberg, Johanna Terwin in Berlin (1918), Liselotte Denner in Vienna and Blanche Dergan in Leipzig all failed to do justice to this role. There was even uncertainty as to how the minor characters should be depicted. Should the Opersänger be presented as an unsympathetic, grotesque figure (as one critic in Vienna thought) or as a genuine lover (230)? Was Alexander Granach right in performing *Der alte Herr* as a crudely drawn, noisy, lecherous monster or should this figure be presented as a dignified, reserved aristocrat? In Paul Krohmann's stylised production in Bremen, Ernst Glasemann's effective *alter Herr* was fleshed out as a real living person in contrast to the abstractness of the other characters.“ Even such a leading Kaiser critic as Bernhard Diebold was forced to concede that *Der Brand im Opernhaus* was "ein (nach Massstab Kaiser!)

-----  
 “Dr. Walter Schmits, n.d., n.s., GKC.

“ko., *Weserzeitung*, 10.6.1925. Lindemann wrote: "Aber Ernst Glasemann gab den alten Herrn, der vom Kaiser sicher mehr als zynisch-dämonische Figur angelegt ist, ja schon von vorne herein menschlicher und schuf daher eine ganz prächtige Gestalt eines alten Lebemanns, mit der er besonders in der Eingangsszene brillierte, die wiederum nicht nur ein Meisterstück des Theaterschreibers Kaiser, sondern hier auch der Darstellung war" (n.d., n.s., GKC).



mittelmässiges Stück".<sup>68</sup>

### *Der gerettete Alkibiades*

*Der gerettete Alkibiades*, a "Stück in drei Teilen", which was first written in 1917-19, was revised in 1919 and published in 1920 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). Although a newly written work, it has much in common with Kaiser's earlier dramas, both stylistically and thematically. Like *Die jüdische Witwe* (first written in 1904) and *König Hahnrei* (first written in 1910), it is a large-scale historical drama with open form and a massive cast. As in both these plays, Kaiser reinterprets his traditional subject-matter (the Judith legend; the Tristan theme; the life of Socrates) according to a modern perspective, which de-idealises the historical events. Just as any idealistic reasons for Judith's heroism are undermined by her physical motivation (her actions are determined by sexual frustration), so too is Sokrates' act of heroism (his rescue of Alkibiades) undermined by its physical motivation (the thorn in his foot). Sokrates' philosophy is also a sham, a cover-up. He develops his philosophy of the primacy of the mind to prevent Alkibiades from becoming a laughing-stock, which would happen if he revealed the true reason for his act of heroism (the thorn).<sup>69</sup> Kaiser presents a de-idealised view

---

<sup>68</sup>B. Diebold, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 9.2.1925.

<sup>69</sup>See G. Kaiser, *Der gerettete Alkibiades*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, I, 772 and 776-77.





of Ancient Greece which is the opposite of the picture painted by Goethe and Winckelmann:

Ich glaube – fühle – weiss:  
 Dass ich fast unmögliches geleistet habe. Der ganze  
 Platon darin – der ganze Nietzsche – – und alles  
 aufgelöst in Szenisches blutvollster Gestaltung.  
 Ich habe Griechenland neu geschaffen – – und das des  
 Goethe-Winkelmann gestürzt.  
 Die Menschheit muss mir danken – oder es giebt sie  
 nicht. – –<sup>70</sup>

As already noted, the central problem of *Der gerettete Alkibiades* – the contradiction of mind and body, of "Geist" and "Leben" – is a problem common to many of Kaiser's early works. For Kenworthy, this theme reached "its finest expression" here.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, the contrast between Sokrates (who represents "Geist", the mind, art) and Alkibiades (who represents health, virility, life) is far superior to the earlier treatment of this dialectic in *Rektor Kleist* (the contrast between Kleist and Kornmüller). Like Kleist, Sokrates is another of Kaiser's deformed, hunchbacked intellectuals. This highly intellectual play demonstrates (through the thorn) how the mind cannot be divorced from the body. Kenworthy writes: "It is only one of the paradoxes in this most contradictory of writers that he makes sovereign use of the intellect to assert the pre-eminence of the flesh."<sup>72</sup>

Like *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, *Der gerettete Alkibiades* is a mixture of Expressionist and

-----  
<sup>70</sup>G. Kaiser, letter to Otto Liebscher, 13.8.1919, in *Briefe*, pp. 174–75.

<sup>71</sup>Kenworthy, p. 20.

<sup>72</sup>Kenworthy, p. 21.



non-Expressionist elements. Its "Telegrammstil", its settings, which are both realistic and symbolic (e.g. the attic symbolises the isolation of the intellect), and the colour symbolism (the costumes and sets) are features also found in Kaiser's Expressionist dramas. In addition, Klaus Petersen, who interprets Sokrates' death very positively, sees the play as presenting the (Expressionist) theme of regeneration, with the young Plato symbolising the "Neuer Mensch".<sup>73</sup> For Schürer, *Der gerettete Alkibiades* belonged "stylistically [...] to his [Kaiser's] most Expressionist dramas".<sup>74</sup> He thought that the play was related to Expressionism as well because of its underlying problems:

In the fate of Sokrates, Kaiser actually portrays the dilemma of the Expressionists and their mission: they would have liked to save the world by

-----

<sup>73</sup>According to Petersen, Sokrates commits suicide because he has seen the destruction wreaked by his own intellectualism. He destroys himself ("Geist") in order to save "das Leben" and Greece. In the final scene, Kaiser succeeds in synthesizing the conflict between Sokrates and Alkibiades: "Mit der Farbe grau als einer Mischung von schwarz und weiss kommt nun dem Geist aber farbsymbolisch nicht mehr eine einseitig lebensfeindliche, sondern eine verbindende Eigenschaft zu. Und damit ist schon ein noch tieferer Sinn von Rettung und Opfer durch Sokrates angekündigt: Das dialektische Verhältnis von Geist und Leben mündet ein in eine höhere Synthese, die Liebe, in die Sehnsucht nach dem 'neuen Menschen', der weder die reine Hirnlichkeit noch die reine Vitalität lebt, sondern die Synthese beider. [...] Das Erneuerungsmotiv ist in der Sterbeszene deutlich herausgearbeitet. Kressen wachsen um das Gefängnisfenster, ein 'Schein von Morgensonne' [...] bricht herein. Am Fussende des toten Sokrates stehen die Knaben auf. In dem Knaben Platon ersteht sinnbildlich [...] der 'neue Mensch', der Geist und Leben, Sokrates und Alkibiades in sich vereinigt" ("*Der gerettete Alkibiades*," in *Interpretationen zu Georg Kaiser*, ed. Armin Arnold [Stuttgart: Klett, 1980], pp. 86-87).

<sup>74</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 75. Unfortunately, he does not explain in any detail what he considers these Expressionist stylistic features to be.





establishing a new 'religion' in order to hide the knowledge of the meaninglessness of man's existence, of nihilism, from mankind, but they also reveal it. The contradictory actions are caused by a schizophrenic state of mind. Just as Athens is destroyed in spite of Sokrates' sacrifice, so the Expressionists' vision could not save modern society, nor divert it from its suicidal course.<sup>75</sup>

For Sokel, *Der gerettete Alkibiades* was "one of the most brilliant works of Expressionism, illustrating both the Platonic tendency and the basic cultural problem of which Expressionism was one manifestation."<sup>76</sup> However, the Expressionist aspects do not predominate and the play cannot be considered a typical Expressionist drama. As already indicated, this work has, in terms of its style and themes, much more in common with Kaiser's early works than with his major Expressionist dramas. What really distinguishes it from the early works, though, is the dramatic quality, the refinement of Kaiser's dialectics<sup>77</sup> and the depth with which he treats his subject matter in this "Denkspiel".<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>76</sup>Walter H. Sokel, Introduction to *Anthology of German Expressionist Drama* (New York: Anchor, 1963), p. xxxi.

<sup>77</sup>What Kaiser admired about Plato was his use of dialectics: "Rede stachelt Widerrede - neue Funde reizt jeder Satz - das Ja überspringt sein Nein zu vollerm Ja - die Steigerung ist von masslosem Schwung - und auf den Schlüssen bläht sich geformter Geist wie die Hände Gottes über seiner Weltschöpfung" ("Das Drama Platons oder *Der gerettete Alkibiades*; Der platonische Dialog," 1917, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 544).

<sup>78</sup>This term, which led to the frequent description of Kaiser as a "Denkspieler", was used in Kaiser's essay on Plato and *Der gerettete Alkibiades*: "Für die Würde seines Ausdrucksmittels sucht der Dramatiker in strenger Prüfung nach wichtiger Bestätigung. Jetzt entdeckte er sich die Notwendigkeit der Dramaform. Mit festem Finger zeigt er auf Platon. Hier ist Aufruf und Verheissung von allem Anfang schon geschehen. Das Gebiet weitet sich in grenzenlosen Bezirk. Da befriedigt Schauspiel tiefere Begierde: ins Denk-Spiel sind wir eingezogen und bereits erzogen aus





Otto Liebscher directed the premiere of *Der gerettete Alkibiades* on 29.1.1920 at the Residenz-Theater in Munich.<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, those critics who had been raised on a Classical education were unsympathetic towards a play which deviated so greatly from its historical sources. They expected a favourable characterisation of Socrates similar to Plato's treatment of the philosopher. They were so inflexible and traditional in their attitudes that they could not cope with Kaiser's modern, de-idealised Sokrates. The reviewer for the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* (246) was disappointed because Kaiser's crude, demeaning picture of Socrates had little in common with Plato's impressive portrait of the man. Socrates' name demanded a far clearer and much more reverential treatment. This reviewer was unconvinced by several departures from the historical account – by Sokrates' wretched behaviour on the battlefield, by his dishonesty before the "Preisrichter" and by a Sokrates who was so radically anti-life. Likewise, this unclear, distorted, cynical Sokrates was too unpleasant for the critic from the *Berlin Kabel* (247). The reviewer for *Das Bayerische Vaterland* (250) complained that there was little in the play which corresponded to the traditional, humanistic view of Ancient Greece and that this Sokrates contradicted the conventional view of him as a noble, wise philosopher. Kaiser's contemporaries did not really

<sup>78</sup>(cont'd)karger Schau-Lust zu glückvoller Denk-Lust" ("Das Drama Platons," in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 545).

<sup>79</sup>Rühle dates the premiere wrongly as taking place on 28.1.1920, p. 184.



understand the significance of the play's title and thought that it was misleading because it placed the emphasis on Alkibiades, when really the drama was concerned with Sokrates. As a result, there were those who wanted to retitle the play *Sokrates* (249, 252) or *Der Held wider Willen* (252) or *Der Retter des Alkibiades* (249).

Contrasting conclusions were reached as to the style of *Der gerettete Alkibiades*. Kurt Martens (245) thought that it was best described by the term "desillusionistisch" (a term which had been used ten years previously) rather than as an Expressionist work because it de-idealised commonly accepted historical beliefs (in this case, Sokrates' act of heroism). However, the critic for the *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung* (252) considered this play a typical example of the new Expressionist style of drama. At least he was one of the few people in Munich to realise that Kaiser was not trying to recreate Ancient Greece according to conventional historical accounts. Kaiser was far too original to merely reproduce the Sokrates of Plato's and Xenophon's accounts. This critic saw that Kaiser, instead of presenting a favourable picture of the philosopher, was trying to portray Sokrates ironically. The non-heroic, de-idealised treatment of history reminded some reviewers of George Bernard Shaw (244, 253).

Many aspects of Kaiser's text came under fire. For once, he was criticised as having failed in his dramatic structure. The action did not seem properly formed; the nine





scenes, which were too loosely connected, did not mesh together (248, 249). The plot of this problematic work lacked focus, there was no inner unity and it was difficult to deduce its central underlying theme (244, 247). The scene with Phryne was not well linked to the main action (250); the fish-market scene was completely unmotivated and could easily be omitted (249). Kaiser's reasons for having Sokrates condemned to death did not convince Alfred Mensi-Klarbach (249) and L. G. Oberlaender (244). In addition, the Expressionist language only added to the work's incomprehensibility (246).

The scene which was best received by the Munich critics was the final death scene. As was to be expected, these conservative critics liked this scene for conventional reasons – it was warmer in tone and was also closer to the historical sources and to traditional theatre (244, 250). On the whole, the critical reaction to Kaiser's text was unfavourable. The reviewer for the *Münchener Zeitung* (253) concluded that, despite its attempts at theatrical effect, this was a boring play. Because of its lack of clarity there was no tension. The contrived, improbable plot only confirmed to this critic that *Der gerettete Alkibiades* was a poor piece of drama. Kaiser's theoretical attempts to cast light on his own creation were to no avail. Greeven (248) thought that Kaiser's remarks in his "Mythos" essay were an attempt to cover up the play's lack of content by adding a



theoretical dimension.<sup>80</sup> Behind Kaiser's pompous language was only a "Dreigroschenweisheit" – small causes lead to large effects. The initial trivial cause was present (the thorn) but where were the enormous consequences? This empty play only concentrated on inessentials; missing was "das Wesentlichere".

There were problems not only with Kaiser's text but also with Otto Liebscher's production, which was too undisciplined (247). The actors, in their attempt to adapt to the latest style of acting, appeared forced and unnaturally loud (246). Oberlaender thought that Liebscher had not been able to achieve what he had intended – namely, to fill his actors with life by producing Kaiser in the right style. Kurt Stieler's Sokrates was not convincing because his heroic death seemed to contradict the earlier ironic, de-idealised presentation of this character (244, 253). Several critics praised Stieler's performance, although the final death scene was much too operatic (246, 249, 251). There were complaints that Helene Ritscher (Phryne) was too loud and lacked the right style (246, 251),

-----  
<sup>80</sup>Kaiser writes here: "Wirksam wird Mythos mit kleinstem Mittel – und schiesst gleich aus geringstem Anlass in unermessliche Erweiterung. Das ist Zeichen des Mythos: sehr klein den Anlass zu wählen" ("Mythos," 1919, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 555). Greeven discusses this quotation. Kaiser concludes his essay as follows: "Mächtig schafft Mythos im Sinnbild – und im kleinsten Ding des Splitters eines Dorns, den er aus Wurzel in den Weltball gestossen zum Riesenschattenbaum des Weltalls erhebt, beweist er seine schöpferische Macht – die Menschenmacht ist, wenn sich der Mensch entscheidet: im Geringsten das Unendliche auszudenken" (p. 556).





that Frl. Lena (Xantippe) screeched too much and was unconvincing (244, 251) and that Ulmer's Alkibiades was too conventional (251). Elchinger (251) felt that Liebscher had been unable to unify the contradictory styles of the various actors. The critic for the *Münchener Zeitung* considered the production (apart from the sets) even worse than the text. The acting was poor, this performance had no life and the mass scenes lacked momentum. For Oberlaender, the battle scene was not really effective on the stage, because it verged too much on comedy. Emil Pirchan's modern, non-historical sets had a strong visual impact (246, 249, 252). They were very simple, monumental and Expressionist; in particular, a garish red was used (244, 249, 253). Not surprisingly, there were those who complained that the style and the colours of the sets were the complete opposite of Greek art (250) and who objected to "solchen abschreckenden Bildern" (251). Elchinger concluded that major changes were needed in the ensemble, if the Residenz-Theater wanted to reach the standards of the Munich Kammerspiele in producing modern drama. Most reports of the public response were negative. The audience seemed dissatisfied, bewildered; they had problems understanding the action and the language; finally, there was some modest, hesitant applause (244, 246, 250, 251).

Shortly after the Munich premiere, *Der gerettete Alkibiades* was produced for the first time at the Württembergisches Landestheater in Stuttgart. Many of the





same points were raised here as in Munich. According to two critics, there was no clear thread to the action and no central theme was emphasized in the play's series of "Bilder" (254, 255). Kaiser's scene with the poet at the "Strandhaus" (the "Gastmahl") seemed a weak imitation of Plato's version, which possessed more life and insight than the whole of *Der gerettete Alkibiades*. Only in the final scenes before Sokrates' death did Kaiser really approach the atmosphere of Ancient Greece (255). The critic for the *Württembergische Zeitung* (257) complained that the "Gastmahl" scene had little in common with the spirit of Plato's dialogues and he described Kaiser's technique in the battle scene as crude and unaccomplished. Again, Kaiser seemed influenced by Shaw in his undermining of historical heroism (257). The play was described as an imperfect mixture of tragedy and irony, of the melancholy and the grotesque (255). For the reviewer from the *Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt* (255), the unprepared, abrupt, intense scenes, with their sharp, sudden contrast of opposites, were typical of Kaiser's Expressionist technique, which aimed at short bursts of dramatic effectiveness. He concluded that, on the whole, this was a problematic work and was disappointed that Kaiser had not fulfilled his talent with this cool, intellectual play. Although he did not find the underlying theme of this uneven work always completely clear, the reviewer for the *Schwäbischer Merkur* (256) nevertheless conceded that there were some scenes (Sokrates and Xantippe



in the attic; Sokrates and Phryne; the trial and the final death scene) which were very effective. For this critic, Kaiser's view of Ancient Greece was appealing and refreshing. The reviewer for the *Württembergische Zeitung* thought that Kaiser's presentation of an Athens, which, devastated by war and hunger and divided by internal political squabbling, was not afraid to put on trial its unfortunate generals and its wisest citizen, was effective because of its topicality in early post-war Germany. He still felt, though, that Kaiser's satire at times lacked any deeper meaning, as in the cheap fish-market scene, and that the ambivalence between seriousness and comedy was confusing.

Wilhelm von Scholz's production received lively applause and was considered a good success (254, 256). The critic for the *Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt* complained that the "Gastmahl" scene was spoiled by the garish colours of its setting, that the mass scenes could have been better and that there were problems with the language. However, the acting was well praised (254). According to the reviewer for the *Schwäbischer Merkur*, Max Marx as Sokrates presented convincingly the philosopher's moral greatness and attractive personality, which would seem to imply that either the critic or the actor had failed to notice the irony of the role. Marx was especially noble in the final scenes (257).





*Der gerettete Alkibiades* proved too difficult a play for the theatres and critics of Kaiser's day. A critic in Darmstadt wrote in 1924 of the drama:

Vor vier Jahren in München uraufgeführt und glatt durchgefallen, konnte das Stück dort nur wenige Male wiederholt werden und blieb seitdem verschollen. Die Wiedergabe dieses anspruchsvollen Bühnenwerkes ist ausserordentlich schwer. Es enthält ca. 70 sprechende Rollen und stellt ungemein hohe Anforderungen an die Regie.<sup>8</sup>

The failure of the Munich premiere and the hostility of the traditionalist critics, who could not cope with Kaiser's de-idealisation of Plato's Greece, was unfortunate. *Der gerettete Alkibiades*, although complex and problematic, deserved far better because of its intelligent, dialectical structure and the depth of its content.

### *Europa*

The third Kaiser play to be premiered in 1920 was *Europa*, an early work which was first written in 1914-15 and published in 1915 (Berlin: S. Fischer). The basic framework of Kaiser's "Spiel und Tanz in fünf Aufzügen" is Nietzschean. The inhabitants of King Agenor's realm are extremely civilised; this is a land of undisturbed peace, where aestheticism reigns supreme. The highest form of activity is dancing, but the style of dancing which is performed here is totally Apollonian in its moderation of the impulses. Unfortunately, Agenor's daughter, Europa, is

<sup>8</sup>anon., n.d., n.s., GKC — a review of Kurt Barré's 1924 production of the play in Darmstadt.



neither attracted by the local effeminate dancers nor by Zeus's extremely controlled performance, with which he tried to win her favours. In fact, the opposite appeals to her. She prefers the untamed, the Dionysian – as symbolised by the bull's wild prancing and the virile, unsophisticated warriors who invade Agenor's kingdom. She is unafraid of the bull and completely willing to depart with the warriors (accompanied also by the girls of the kingdom) to found a new country. The development of *Europa* is therefore from the Apollonian to the Dionysian. Even the dancers abandon their unmanly ways, choosing instead to produce a future generation for Agenor's kingdom with the robust local maids. The drama ends in an affirmation of war and amoral vitalism over aestheticism and weary pacifism. Although both plays were written and published almost at the same time, *Europa* offers a stark contrast to *Die Bürger von Calais*, where Duguesclins' conventional militarism is overcome by the pacifism of the "Neuer Mensch".<sup>82</sup>

For Kenworthy, the rarefied aestheticism of Agenor's kingdom represented "an amusing caricature of similar tendencies in Wilhelmian Germany."<sup>83</sup> Richard Samuel also noted the play's topical features:

The 'Tanzspiel' *Europa* is the most ingenious and witty comedy of Expressionism with its clever representation of topical fashions (e.g. the modern Cult of Dancing and the Youth Movement) in classical costume.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup>*Die Bürger von Calais* was first written in 1912–13 and first published in 1914.

<sup>83</sup>Kenworthy, p. 10.

<sup>84</sup>R. Samuel and R. H. Thomas, *Expressionism in German Life*,





However, in terms of style and content, this is not really an Expressionist drama, even though Kaiser himself described *Europa* as presenting the (Expressionist) theme of regeneration.<sup>85</sup> A light work, it owes more to "Neuromantik" than to Expressionism – the atmospheric settings, the visual splendour of the colour symbolism and the lighting effects, the combination of realism and the supernatural, the fairy-tale world, the mixture of drama, music and dance. Schürer is more accurate than Samuel when he writes: "With *Europa* [...] Kaiser reached the height of his 'Jugendstil' period and, at the same time, surpassed it."<sup>86</sup> Once again, we have an early work which treats the theme of mind and body and which, like *Die jüdische Witwe* and *König Hahnrei*, reinterprets a traditional story from a new perspective (this time, the myth of Europa).

*Europa* was premiered on 5.11.1920 at the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin. This premiere aroused great public interest because only a few weeks earlier (13.10.1920) Kaiser had been arrested in Berlin for embezzlement. Indeed, on the same day as the premiere, Kaiser arrived under arrest in Munich, having been extradited there from Berlin.

-----  
<sup>84</sup> (cont'd) *Literature and the Theatre (1910–24)* (Cambridge, 1939; rpt. Philadelphia: Saifer, 1971). p. 59.

<sup>85</sup> Kaiser: "Der einzige Vorwurf von Dichtung: der ist die Erneuerung des Menschen – wird in dieser Umkehrung *Europa* betont. Das Lustspiel verweist auf die Ernsthaftigkeit des Problems. Seine Tragfähigkeit erprobt sich am Widerspiel. Es ist altes Dramengesetz. Die Tragödie bestimmt Aufstieg des Menschen in Bezirke des Vollkommeneren – das Lustspiel belächelt sein Verharren auf bequemer Ebene" ("Europa," Oct. 1920, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 556).

<sup>86</sup> Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 57.





Monty Jacobs (263) saw *Europa* as an early work which, like *Die jüdische Witwe* and *König Hahnrei*, treated traditional literary figures from a bold and refreshing modern perspective. Confusion prevailed amongst Kaiser's contemporaries with regard to the ending – did Kaiser intend the warriors to be presented positively or ironically? The director Karlheinz Martin, who cut from the production important parts of the text in order to quicken the pace of the action, presented the warriors parodistically as comical caricatures, as "lächerliche Schneidergesellen" (259, 263, 270). However, Fritz Engel (258, 259) considered this satirical treatment of the warriors a misunderstanding of the original text. For Engel, *Europa* was an anti-pacifist work, which had been written in 1915 amidst the great German war victories. Kaiser's parody of Greek legend advocated male strength and virility over effeminacy. Yet, for this message to be consistent, the warriors could not be portrayed comically. The anti-pacifism of this "Dionysosspiel" was further proof to Engel of the ideological diversity of a writer who in other plays had appeared communist, mystical, enlightened, optimistic and pessimistic. Karl Strecker (265) complained that the ending was unclear and contradictory – after *Europa* had been carried into the sea by Zeus in the shape of a bull, Kaiser brought the main Greek legend to an abrupt halt, only to tack on two other classical themes (the warriors born from dragons' teeth and the story of Romulus).



Several Berlin critics had misgivings about Kaiser's text. For Fechter (266), *Europa* did not provide proof of Kaiser's importance as a writer. Kaiser did not possess the "Geist" required for a light, delicate work; the final product was too literary. Fechter found little which was positive in such an empty, boring work with its forced humour and unmotivated happenings. Ernst Heilborn (261) complained that *Europa* was an empty drama lacking in humour and living characters of flesh and blood. Even one of Kaiser's main qualities — his technical ability as a dramatist — had deserted him on this occasion. For Siegfried Jacobsohn (270), Kaiser's "Dionysiertum" was too tame; there was no depth and not enough originality to the play. Engel (259) was slightly more generous. Although he conceded that Kaiser had not taken enough care with the work and that its rough edges had not been smoothed away, he still acknowledged its many pleasant features. Kaiser's introduction to the play did not really help the critics.<sup>87</sup> Strecker was sceptical of his remarks in this "Europa" essay on the nature of tragedy and comedy; Faktor (267) did not seem convinced by Kaiser's comments on regeneration.

However, the Berlin critics were unhappy not only with Kaiser's text but also with Karlheinz Martin's production. Martin, who was not interested in a quiet, gentle performance of *Europa*, tried to present a "grosses Schaustück" (258), using all kinds of gimmicky and

---

<sup>87</sup>See Kaiser, "Europa" (Oct. 1920), in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 556–57.





spectacular effects. For the premiere, the leader of the warriors even arrived on a real horse, although the bull was not genuine (258, 263). Ludwig Kainer's colourful sets and light effects conjured up a "Zirkuspantomimenreich" and, to heighten the visual appeal, the girls were scantily dressed (269). Just as he tampered with the ending, Martin was not afraid to take further liberties with the original, cutting the text and inserting new material of his own – e.g. he added topical jokes (259, 263). Monty Jacobs complained that there was a massive gulf between Kaiser's text and Martin's production. He thought that this graceful work was best suited to a small theatre and that the Grosses Schauspielhaus was totally inappropriate. This enormous theatre required a loud production which meant that the essence of the play (its gentle irony) was abandoned. The production became tasteless as the moments of parody were allowed to dominate and its overall tone degenerated. The characters were far too exaggerated – especially the warriors and the effeminate locals. Jacobs concluded that such a debased, crude distortion of an original text was not usual before Reinhardt's stages were taken over by Hollaender.

Other reviewers, too, felt that only noisy, garish productions were possible in such a massive theatre, where any attempts at subtlety were lost in the crowd (259, 270). Hermann Kasack (260) was surprised that a director could so misunderstand Kaiser's play by wanting to stage it in the



Grosses Schauspielhaus instead of in a small intimate theatre. He complained that Kaiser's text had been falsified into a farce, that its idyllic elements had been sacrificed for crude mass effects and that the addition of coarse jokes destroyed the refined irony of the original. Jacobsohn condemned this unlyrical, farcical production with its over-exaggerated warriors and dancers as a dreadful waste of time. For Faktor, the end result did not justify Martin's decision to approach the drama with parodistic aims and to emphasize its comical, burlesque aspects at the expense of the serious, intellectual content. Max Hochdorf (269) rejected the production as "konfektionierte Kunst", remarking cynically that such an extravagant, sensational presentation of Kaiser's play was not motivated by genuine artistic concerns but by the desire to attract and titillate a jaded public. Karl Strecker disliked *Europa*'s stylistic contradictions and the mixture of poetry and farce. He felt that the farcical tone of the production undermined the poetic elements, which predominated in the text, and that Martin's insertion of new comic material was unjustified.

The impressive cast were unable to save Kaiser's play and Martin's production. For the premiere and some of the other performances, Heinrich George substituted for Werner Krauss, who was filming, as König Agenor. Alexander Moissi played Zeus and there was praise for Hermann Thimig's humorous Hermes (263, 269). The diminutive Roma Bahn, Martin's wife, played Europa. For Fechter, making such a





delicate actress perform in such a vast auditorium was grounds for divorce. Strecker complained that she was completely inadequate in the title role. Ludwig Kainer's set remained the same for all five acts, with only the lighting and colours changing (266).<sup>88</sup> Faktor was unhappy with this unchanging set, which was part meadow, part royal court, because it created practical problems for the actors and because it also required the spectators to ignore the meadow in certain scenes. Strecker was more favourable, praising the stage design and the "Spiel und Tanz" aspect of the production. The accompanying music to *Europa*, which had been composed by Werner Robert Heymann, was considered appropriate to the play.<sup>89</sup> It was slightly elevated, slightly modern "Operettenmusik" (264). According to Bie (268), this non-experimental music was not as extreme as Heymann's usual compositions. Hans Knudsen (262) criticised Martin because his parodistic production was unfair to the original in that it disregarded the text and Heymann's fine, completely non-parodistic music.

*Europa* was premiered before a vast audience in the Grosses Schauspielhaus of approximately 3,000 spectators.<sup>90</sup> Not surprisingly, after Kaiser's recent arrest, the premiere

<sup>88</sup>There is a photograph of this set in Steffens, p. 132. Steffens names the director incorrectly as Max Reinhardt.

<sup>89</sup>Schürer states the composer's name correctly on p. 58 of his monograph on Kaiser. However, on p. 133, he remarks that Fritz Stiedry wrote the music to *Europa* in 1914. See also Kaiser, *Briefe*, p. 132 and p. 1155.

<sup>90</sup>Marilyn S. Fries, "Georg Kaiser's Public Challenge. Press Reactions to his Arrest and Trial, 1920-22," in *Georg Kaiser Symposium*, ed. H. A. Pausch and E. Reinhold (Berlin: Agora, 1980), p. 159.





caused a public scandal. The performance ended amidst an uproar of clapping, stamping, hissing and whistling (258). Strecker and Faktor reported that the reaction of the audience was as contradictory as the play and the production. Faktor described the premiere as a very noisy, lively evening with the spectators divided between Kaiser's supporters and enemies. On the one hand, there was the cry that Kaiser should be acquitted; on the other, protest against such a "decadent" drama. Fechter felt that both sides were wrong – that *Europa* did not justify Kaiser's release because it provided no real proof of his poetic ability and that it was not at all decadent because, in fact, it rejected pacifism and aestheticism in favour of virility and physical strength. Jacobs questioned Martin's claim, in his speech after the performance supporting Kaiser, that the applause was a sign that the audience wanted Kaiser to be acquitted. By analogy, this would mean that those who were displaying their dissent were supporting Kaiser's imprisonment whereas, according to Jacobs, they were really expressing their anger towards Martin's production. Critics like Jacobs and Engel were sympathetic towards Kaiser's misfortune and generally reluctant to discuss his imprisonment. Fechter thought that it would be more tactful not to perform Kaiser's dramas at this time as there was the danger that bourgeois criteria might interfere with an aesthetic evaluation of his work. On the other hand, he was reluctant to criticise the drama of a writer who was



already in such an unfortunate predicament.

In conclusion, it can be stated that this Berlin premiere was by no means a great success.<sup>'1</sup> The Berlin critics were disappointed by Kaiser's text and very unhappy with Martin's extravagant, heavy-handed production, which debased the original to the level of crude farce. *Europa* failed, to a certain extent, because it was produced by the wrong director in the wrong theatre at the wrong time. There was a public scandal – partly because of the differing reactions in the audience towards Kaiser's arrest, but partly also, one suspects, in agreement with Jacobs, because of Martin's inappropriate production.

Marilyn Fries writes of the premiere:

One wonders how much attention the public would have directed towards Kaiser without the intervention of this premiere and the resulting uproar. Indeed, one suspects that the theater riot contributed considerably, if only temporarily, to Kaiser's later success.<sup>'2</sup>

However, it is difficult to agree with this comment, which ignores Kaiser's reception in Berlin before the premiere of *Europa*. It seems to imply that Kaiser was practically

-----  
<sup>'1</sup>Schürer, who considered *Europa* "among the best works of Kaiser", described this Berlin premiere as "a rousing and deserved success" (*Kaiser*, p. 58). This remark contradicts those reviews in my possession which report that the production provoked a public scandal and that the public reaction was divided (258, 266, 267). It is true that Karl Strecker, writing in the *Tägliche Rundschau* on 6.11.1920, referred to this premiere as a "wenn auch bestrittenen, so doch sehr lauten Bühnenerfolg" (quoted by Fries in *Kaiser Symposium*, p. 160). However, the next day (7.11.1920), Strecker modified his position, writing in the *Tägliche Rundschau*: "Aus Gegensätzen gemischt, widerspruchsvoll wie Stück und Aufführung war auch die Aufnahme" (265).

<sup>'2</sup>*Kaiser Symposium*, p. 171, note 8.





unknown to the Berlin public before his arrest and this scandal and that he needed to be imprisoned and a riot to take place in order to become a successful playwright! If this were true, it would cheapen considerably Kaiser's reputation as a dramatist. Yet many of his plays (*Die Sorina*, *Die Koralle*, *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, *Gas I*, *Die Bürger von Calais* and *Hölle Weg Erde*) had already been performed in the capital before *Europa*. This was not even Kaiser's first public scandal there, *Von morgens bis mitternachts* and *Hölle Weg Erde* both having caused scandals earlier. Moreover, Kaiser was not unknown to the Berlin public, having already established himself as a leading contemporary dramatist in 1919 with the Volksbühne production of *Gas I*, which was a popular success.

### *Die jüdische Witwe*

*Die jüdische Witwe*, an early work first written in 1904 and the first Kaiser play to be published non-privately (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1911), was his only drama to be premiered in 1921. It was published in 1911 as a "Biblische Komödie" but then in 1920 the sub-title was changed to "Bühnenspiel in fünf Akten". The themes of *Die jüdische Witwe* are very typical of the early Kaiser. Once more, he reinterprets a traditional literary topic from a modern perspective – this time, the Judith story. As in *Der gerettete Alkibiades*, Kaiser de-mythicalizes historical



heroism. The early problem of the contradiction between mind and body again recurs. Manasse is a typical intellectual of this period – an impotent voyeur, who is physically feeble, and senile.’<sup>3</sup> Judith is motivated by her body, not her mind.’<sup>4</sup> Kaiser goes a step further than Hebbel in his presentation of a Judith who is driven merely by sexual frustration. There are no idealistic, patriotic reasons for her slaying of Holofernes. She is not a noble heroine but a vitalistic, amoral creature in the spirit of Nietzsche, just trying to satisfy her natural instincts.’<sup>5</sup> The sexual undermining of Judith's act of "heroism" makes her far more accessible to modern critics raised on Freud's theories.

Like *König Hahnrei* and *Der gerettete Alkibiades*, this is a full-scale historical drama with a massive cast. The

-----  
<sup>3</sup>Herbert W. Reichert comments: "Judith's husband, Manasse, has much in common with Rector Kleist as he likewise embodies impotent intellectuality strongly desiring life [...]" ("Nietzsche and Georg Kaiser" in *Friedrich Nietzsche's Impact on Modern German Literature* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1975], p. 64).

<sup>4</sup>Kenworthy writes of the conflict between mind and body here: "In *Die jüdische Witwe* [...] the issue is decided in favour of the flesh from the beginning; what we are shown is the progress of its triumph" (p. 4).

<sup>5</sup>See Schürer, p. 72 and Reichert, p. 64. In contrast, Ingrid Schuster remarks: "Aus dieser kurzen Inhaltsangabe allein wird bereits deutlich, wie falsch es wäre, Kaiser auf die Position Nietzsches festlegen zu wollen. [...] Keineswegs handelt es sich in diesem Stück um eine 'Fleischkomödie', wie Diebold meint, noch um einen Konflikt zwischen Körper und Geist, der von Anfang an zugunsten des Fleisches entschieden sei, wie B. J. Kenworthy schreibt." She continues: "Was jedoch alle ausser dem dümmlich-brutalen Holofernes lähmt, ist die Tatsache, dass Judith die Initiative ergreift. Nicht ihre Sinnlichkeit erschreckt, sondern ihr 'emanzipiertes' Verhalten. Judith ist zu 'männlich' [...] Judiths Schicksal steht – bei aller Komik – stellvertretend für das der unterdrückten Frau schlechthin" ("*Die jüdische Witwe*," in *Kaiser Interpretationen*, pp. 58–59).





Biblical atmosphere is evoked in epic breadth. Although there is a conventional five-act structure, the three unities are not observed. Schürer describes *Die jüdische Witwe* as "immersed in a neo-Romantic atmosphere".<sup>96</sup> However, the "Telegrammstil" (e.g. Manasse's ecstatic comments while watching Judith bathe in Act II)<sup>97</sup> and the sets, which are both realistic and symbolic, anticipate the Expressionist dramas. The banning of Kaiser's play in Berlin was not surprising, considering the final scene, where Judith is seduced by the High Priest in the Holy of Holies, and the eroticism and voyeurism of the second act.<sup>98</sup>

Although first published in 1911, it was not until ten years later that *Die jüdische Witwe* was eventually premiered – on 31.1.1921 at the Landestheater in Meiningen. The premiere provoked contrasting reactions. From one of the reviews, it is easy to understand why the play had problems with the censors. According to this report (272), the "grossartige Frechheit jüdischer Zersetzungs-lust" had created a rather decadent drama with a tasteless, unpleasant subject-matter. Producing such "Zersetzungsprodukte", which with their masochistic, negatively self-critical satire threatened to undermine the last remnants of contemporary morality, was a waste of time, money and effort. Indeed, the actors and the director deserved a more worthwhile object.

-----  
<sup>96</sup>Schürer, pp. 74–75.

<sup>97</sup>I refer to the 1911 edition (Berlin: S. Fischer) which was the version premiered in 1921.

<sup>98</sup>See Kaiser, "Ein Stosseufzer" (1917), in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 543.





Although Kaiser's literary importance was not to be denied, the reviewer concluded that *Die jüdische Witwe*, which lacked the sparkling irony of a *Pucelle* and displayed Kaiser's inability to shape "das Zersetzte", represented an "Entgleisung". However, another critic (271) at the premiere admired the play's symmetry and masterly construction. The actors and Dr. Ulbrich's stylish production, with its fine sets, were well applauded.' A third reviewer (273) considered this a witty, if rather contrived parody and felt that its unusual gracefulness protected against any embarrassing moments.

When *Die jüdische Witwe* was presented in Berlin at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm on 7.11.1925, Oscar Bie (275) reported that the play had been performed only infrequently since its premiere. On the same day, Hebbel's *Judith* was also produced in Berlin, at the Volksbühne. Emil Faktor (274) describes the text which was used for the production of *Die jüdische Witwe* as a revised version of the earlier edition.' He was amazed by Kaiser's familiarity, in the earlier version, with Jewish customs and the life-style of such a distant, Biblical period. Yet he felt that the play had too much sense of historical reality and of the ethnic

-----  
'There is a photograph of this production in Kenworthy, facing p. 5.

'Faktor refers to an early version which was about twelve years old. As this production took place in 1925, he is presumably referring to the 1911 first edition of *Die jüdische Witwe* ("Fassung 4", which was premiered in Meiningen). The revised version he mentions must be either "Fassung 5" (written in 1920) or "Fassung 6" (written in 1921). See Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 871.



atmosphere to be a parody. At least in comparison to Hebbel's play, Kaiser's wicked interpretation of the Judith story went much further in questioning and de-idealising Judith's heroism. Faktor admired the boldness of Kaiser's grotesque, bizarre version, which straddled the borders of what was permissible at the time of writing. The mixture of realistic and romantic elements also helped to alleviate any serious objections. However, in the years since this play was first written, its themes had become less topical and immediate. Kaiser, therefore, in revising the text, had tried to emphasize more the play's grotesque aspects at the expense of its realistic-romantic features and to be more daring in depicting scenes which previously had just been reported (e.g. the medical examination of Judith's virginity, the castration of Achior). Although the drama, to a certain extent, lacked maturity and its structure was not perfect, Bie praised the cheeky appeal to the imagination of this extremely wild parody. For a third Berlin critic (276), Kaiser's play, despite its deficiencies and lack of proportion, displayed unusual intellectual courage. However, another local reviewer (277) concluded that Kaiser had failed in his attempt to write an impudent, erotic farce, that the humour was weak, the action slow and the dialogue drawn-out and at times unappealing. Arthur Eloesser (280)<sup>101</sup> was unconvinced by the ending and by a Judith who,

-----

<sup>101</sup> Arthur Eloesser (1870–1938) was a critic in Berlin, at different times, for the *Vossische Zeitung*, *Das blaue Heft* (earlier called the *Freie Deutsche Bühne*) and *Die Weltbühne*. See Rühle, p. 1163.





considering her sexual frustration, preferred the decadent Nebukadnezar over the animalistic, virile Holofernes. He thought that Kaiser's drama had been rightly forgotten and that this revival did him no favour.

Karlheinz Martin, who had directed the extravagant, flamboyant 1920 premiere of *Europa* in Berlin, was also responsible for this production of *Die jüdische Witwe*. His was a lively, colourful version, which concentrated on external effects. Falk (278) thought that Martin had been influenced by Alexander Tairoff in his attempt to reproduce "russisch 'entfesseltes Theater'"; Bie described the production as "auf moderne russische Art".<sup>102</sup> The stage with its scaffolding, towers and bridges, the painted faces, the scantily dressed dancing girls, the Jewish beards and large noses, the bright costumes and the music and singing all contributed to the atmosphere (275, 278). To add a touch of topicality Oskar Homolka's Holofernes even wore a swastika (278). Falk was pleased by the movement, colours and lighting effects of this production.<sup>103</sup>

The Berlin critics, however, were not totally satisfied with Martin's imaginative interpretation of Kaiser's drama. According to one critic (277), Martin seemed to be simply applying the ideas of his production of *Franziska* to a new

-----  
<sup>102</sup>The Russian Alexander Tairoff (1885-1950) had presented guest performances in Berlin of *Prinzessin Brambilla*, Oscar Wilde's *Salome* and Racine's *Phaedra* in April 1923. See Rühle, p. 426.

<sup>103</sup>Steffens, p. 133, has a photograph of a Berlin production of *Die jüdische Witwe*, which would appear to be Martin's production, although he dates it as taking place in 1926.



object – but without the same effectiveness and without the same degree of confidence.<sup>104</sup> Although his boldness and artistic intentions as a director had to be respected and although Kaiser was a major contemporary talent, both appeared to be on the wrong track with this work and its production. Despite the flamboyant colours, despite the moments of lewdness and the touches of nudity, this staging of *Die jüdische Witwe* represented for this critic only an orgy of boredom. Faktor, too, thought that this adaptation of Russian style was less successful than the earlier *Franziska*-production and that Martin did not need to be so dependent on Russian models. Despite his discomfort with Martin's overall intentions, which threatened to reduce Kaiser to the level of Nestroy, he praised many of the details of the production – in particular, its ethnic tone and the careful casting of the roles. For Bie, these external features were very entertaining but slightly drawn-out and had really very little to do with the essence of Kaiser's drama. Falk liked the tempo of the final scenes and their parody of historical events. He also enjoyed the bath scene, the inspection of Judith's virginity and Achior's operation. However, he felt that the exposition suffered because of Kaiser's vacillation between parody and an explanation of events in human terms. This weak, tedious exposition with its long-winded, drawn-out dialogue

-----  
<sup>104</sup>Karlheinz Martin had directed F. Wedekind's *Franziska* at the Deutsches Volkstheater in Vienna during the early months of 1925. See Rühle, p. 210.



demonstrated Kaiser's early inability to concentrate on essentials. Unfortunately, Martin's production did not cut the text but dragged out even more Kaiser's already artificially overblown scenes. Instead of "Entfesselung", a tighter, more condensed presentation was needed. Likewise, Jacobsohn (279) complained that Kaiser had stretched out the material for two acts into five and that Martin should have overcome this problem by producing Kaiser's drawn-out work at a fast pace. Instead, the evening was made even longer through two lengthy intervals and semi-naked dances.

According to Faktor, the contradictions of the production, its ambivalence between parody and historical authenticity, caused problems for the actors. Even a model actress like Frau Sandrock was uncertain whether to present her minor part grotesquely or with pathos. Else Eckersberg as Judith was rather tame despite her semi-nakedness (274, 277); Oskar Homolka's powerful, temperamental Holofernes was highly comical (274). For Jacobsohn, the slow Naturalist style of the acting was not appropriate to the overall "Russian" style of the production. Bie reported that this daring production of a problematic work was greeted by a mixture of applause and dissent. There were also rumours that the Berlin police intended to ban the production (275). Thus, even in 1925, *Die jüdische Witwe* was still risqué and controversial in its sexual undermining of traditional heroism.





## Conclusion

Inevitably, the nine early plays and three new plays premiered between 1917 and 1921 were compared to the six major Expressionist works which were premiered at the same time and which had made Kaiser famous. Perhaps as was to be expected, the comparison was often unfavourable. Jacobsohn (133) referred to *Die Sorina* as Kaiser's weakest work and others dismissed it as a peripheral "Nebenarbeit" (58, 140). Diebold compared *Der Zentaur* unfavourably to *Die Koralle* (147), he considered *Der Brand im Opernhaus* a mediocre work by Kaiser's standards<sup>105</sup> and wondered after seeing the "Milchstrasse" trilogy, which did not throw any new light on Kaiser, when he would return to the heights of *Die Bürger von Calais* (198). *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus* were a disappointment for some critics in comparison to plays like *Die Bürger von Calais*, *Gas* and *Die Koralle* (176, 181, 232). For Ihering (197) in 1930, *Das Frauenopfer* was best left unperformed; others rejected it as Kaiser's weakest play (179) and as a poor opera text (183). The Berlin critics condemned *Der Brand im Opernhaus* as an "Übungsarbeit" (239), as one of his "Missgeburten" (228) and as a torment (227). Fechter thought that it was one of Kaiser's worst plays, which should not be produced any more (238) and he also felt that *Europa* did not provide proof of Kaiser's literary importance (266). Although *Die jüdische Witwe* was criticised at its premiere as a

---

<sup>105</sup>B. Diebold, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 9.2.1925.



"Zersetzungsprodukt" and as a departure for the worse from the standard of Kaiser's other dramas (272), at least the Berlin critics were favourable towards its intellectual courage, its boldness and impudent charm (274, 275, 276). It is not surprising that these early works and the three new works were often compared to the Expressionist plays to their detriment. Apart from *Das Frauenopfer*, *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, *Der gerettete Alkibiades* and *Die jüdische Witwe*, they covered very little new ground. Whereas the Expressionist dramas treated highly topical social themes and were avantgarde stylistically, plays like *Die Sorina*, *Rektor Kleist* and *Die Versuchung* were much too dependent on literary predecessors. Their style and subject-matter were too traditional and clichéd. Moreover, the literary quality of works like *Rektor Kleist* and *Die Versuchung* left much to be desired.

None of these twelve plays could really be considered an overwhelming, unqualified success when it was premiered. The three 1917 premieres of *Die Sorina*, *Die Versuchung* and *Der Zentaur* made little impact. The unsuccessful Berlin production of *Die Sorina* only received sparse applause (137); the critics at the Hamburg premiere were hostile to *Die Versuchung*, which only aroused slight applause from the disappointed spectators (143) and the Frankfurt premiere of *Der Zentaur* provoked much public dissent (27). It was not until the 1925 Berlin production of the revised version of *Der Zentaur* (now called *Margarine*) that the comedy was





really well applauded and considered a good success, mainly because of Ralph Arthur Roberts' outstanding performance as Strobil (156, 160). Although the critics had many complaints regarding Kaiser's text, Bab's production of *Rektor Kleist* in 1918 made this Königsberg premiere moderately successful (163). From the reviews in my possession, *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus* (both premiered in 1918) would appear to have been the most widely produced of the twelve plays covered in this chapter. Yet both plays met with a considerable amount of hostility from the critics – *Das Frauenopfer* in Düsseldorf, Mainz, Cologne, Kiel, Leipzig and Dresden; *Der Brand im Opernhaus* in Berlin (1918 and 1925) and in Leipzig. It was only with the first performance of *Das Frauenopfer* in Berlin (1929) that Kaiser's play was able to win over many critics and was a great public success. *Der Brand im Opernhaus* was well received by the spectators in Hamburg and Vienna. The premiere of the "Milchstrasse" trilogy, also in 1918, was greeted with respect rather than enthusiasm by its Frankfurt audience (199). Two years later (1920), *Der gerettete Alkibiades* bewildered many of the spectators in Munich, although Liebscher's undisciplined production was partly to blame for this failure (246, 247). 1920 also witnessed the failure of *Europa* in Berlin where it was premiered in a crude, inappropriate production, which ended in a theatre scandal, partly also as a result of Kaiser's recent arrest. The only Kaiser premiere of 1921, the Meiningen performance of *Die jüdische Witwe*, was well



applauded (271), although the local critics had differing opinions regarding the play's merits.

Of the plays included in this chapter, *Das Frauenopfer*, *Der Brand im Opernhaus* and *Der gerettete Alkibiades* seem to have been the most problematic for Kaiser's contemporaries. Critics were unsure where *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus* should be placed in the context of Kaiser's "oeuvre". Directors and actors had problems deciding on the appropriate style for these two plays. *Der gerettete Alkibiades* was not really understood by Kaiser's contemporaries in Munich because these critics, reared on a traditional, humanistic education, could not really come to terms with Kaiser's cynical, ironic version of Socrates' Greece. Indeed, one feels that the theatres of Kaiser's day did not do justice to *Der gerettete Alkibiades* and *Die jüdische Witwe*. Although demanding works, both are dramas of substance which need to be revived and explored more on the German stage.

Kaiser's own attempts to explain his dramas to his contemporaries through short theoretical statements often proved fruitless.<sup>106</sup> Greeven (248) was not convinced by the arguments in Kaiser's "Mythos" essay and thought that Kaiser

-----  
<sup>106</sup>Cf. Wolfgang Paulsen who did not see Kaiser really as a theorist: "Dramatische Theorie war seine Sache nicht, und seine diesbezüglichen, recht verschrobenern Auslassungen sind nichts als nachträgliche Rechtfertigungen in der Form von peremptorischen Deklarationen, die man in der Kritik gewöhnlich viel zu ernst und vor allem zu wörtlich genommen hat" ("Literatur aus Literatur: Die Technik der Sprache und die Technik der umkehrbaren Thematik in Kaisers Frühwerk," in *Kaiser Symposium*, pp. 60-61).





was trying to hide the lack of depth to *Der gerettete Alkibiades* through such theorising. Strecker (265) and Faktor (267) seemed sceptical of Kaiser's remarks, in his "Europa" essay, on the nature of tragedy and comedy and on regeneration. Although Kaiser explained in a letter that Sylvette in *Der Brand im Opernhaus* was purified and became a "Neuer Mensch", her final transition did not convince many critics. It was considered the weakest moment in the play (222), especially because many of the actresses at this time lacked the subtlety to present this transformation convincingly. There are also discrepancies between Kaiser's comments in 1917 – that *Die Sorina* had been written (recently) in reaction to his censorship problems and that *Die Muttergottes* had been completed recently – and the information in Huder's bibliography.

From a modern perspective, the themes of these twelve plays seem rather harmless. It is, therefore, rather surprising to learn of all the problems which they had with the censors and to discover those reviews in which the critics displayed their extreme moral indignation towards Kaiser's "scurrilous" dramas. Just as an Expressionist work like *Von morgens bis mitternachts* had been banned, his other non-Expressionist plays suffered the same fate. *Der Zentaur* was banned in Cologne, *Die jüdische Witwe* in Berlin, *Die Muttergottes* and *Das Frauenopfer* in Düsseldorf. Fortunately for Kaiser, the censors were inconsistent from city to city. Although *Von morgens bis mitternachts* was forbidden in





Berlin, Düsseldorf and Frankfurt, it was allowed in Munich, where the censor was more daring; *Die Muttergottes* was forbidden in Düsseldorf but allowed to be premiered as *Die Versuchung* in Hamburg, where there were no censors.<sup>107</sup>

The reasons for Kaiser's problems with the censors and for the moral outrage of contemporary critics were varied. Some times, they were political, other times religious, sexual or moral. Religious objections were raised against *Die Muttergottes* on account of its "tasteless" title (142) and the "offensive" allusions to the Virgin Birth (145). *Das Frauenopfer* and *Die jüdische Witwe* were too sexually risqué for many critics. One critic (172) described *Das Frauenopfer* as "mit ungesund schwüler Erotik überladene Verfallskunst" and felt that the detail with which Kaiser examined his sexual subject-matter was particularly insulting to the women in the audience. Because the erotic content disturbed many of Kaiser's contemporaries, it was not surprising that *Das Frauenopfer* was only allowed to be premiered in Düsseldorf in an abridged version and that directors like Alexander Runge in Stettin presented a shortened, toned-down version. It was mainly the early productions of the play which provoked the moral protests of the critics (Mainz 1919; Cologne 1919; Dresden 1923). The fact that Kaiser's drama was ahead of its times sexually can be seen from the reaction of the critics to the 1929 Berlin production. At least those reviews available did not contain any prudish

---

<sup>107</sup>See Hans Franck, "Der Kampf ums Theater," 1.9.1917, in *Das literarische Echo*, 19 (1916-17), 1431-32.



moral objections. One reviewer (193) even praised the play specifically for being a "Drama der Leidenschaft", for presenting "Bestialität" and human "Urtriebe", features which usually up-to-now had been condemned. *Die jüdische Witwe*, with its moments of eroticism and voyeurism and with its sexually aggressive protagonist, also came under attack. Its subject-matter was unpleasant and such a "Zerzeugungsprodukt" threatened to undermine moral values (272). Even in 1925, Martin's production was considered daring and rumours circulated that the police were planning to ban the play (275). *Der Zentaur*, as well, aroused the moral indignation of many contemporary critics, although not only for sexual reasons. In addition to Konstantin Strobels sexual experiment with the maid, the comedy also satirised the bourgeois virtue of "Pflicht" and did not refrain from black humour (the death of Strobels father, who was processed into margarine). Consequently, it was denounced as annoying, repulsive and "geschmackverderbend" (149), as a smutty, heartless "Sudelei" (159). Problems with the censor also forced Kaiser to change the title of his early comedy *Der Kindermord* to *Die Sorina* (138). Even a harmless, trivial work like *Juana* was able to upset one critic when it was performed as an opera, although this time Kaiser was not solely to blame. The reviewer for the *Völkischer Beobachter* (215) described the work as a problematic experiment, for which Max Ettinger, under the influence of Schönberg, had composed "eine erotisierende hilflose Musik".





## D. The Post-Expressionist Period: 1922-33

### Introduction

After the extensive discovery of Georg Kaiser's early plays during the period 1917-21, the only early dramas to be premiered from 1922-33 were *Der mutige Seefahrer* (first written in 1910), *Der Präsident* (first written in 1905-06) and *König Hahnrei* (first written in 1910). Kaiser was extremely creative during these years, which witnessed the premieres of sixteen newly written works (i.e. works written from 1920). In addition, there were premieres of recently revised versions of older plays<sup>1</sup> and of works which had been changed into a new genre.<sup>2</sup> These 23 premieres (of sixteen new plays, three old plays, two revised versions and two new genres) were performed fairly evenly over the period 1922-33. The highpoints were 1925 and 1928, the year of Kaiser's 50th birthday, which each saw four premieres. Indeed, 1932 was the only year in which a Kaiser premiere did not take place. What is remarkable is the wide variety of styles of the plays premiered, ranging from revue to opera, from comedy to tragicomedy and tragedy and even including a "Volksstück", a "Gesellschaftsspiel" and a -----

<sup>1</sup>*Grossbürger Möller* and *Der Zentaur* reappeared as *David und Goliath* and *Margarine*.

<sup>2</sup>The one-act plays *Der Protagonist* and *Juana* were both turned into one-act operas.



"Wintermärchen". By now, Kaiser had become accepted in Berlin, where six of his dramas were premiered during this period. The leading provincial towns were Dresden (five premieres), Leipzig (four), Frankfurt/M. (four) and Düsseldorf (three). Arthur Hellmer, Gustav Lindemann and Josef Gielen were the most important directors for Kaiser outside the capital; in Berlin, the major figures were Emil Lind, Berthold Viertel, Robert Forster-Larrinaga and Karlheinz Martin. The "Massen-Uraufführungen" of *Zweimal Oliver* (simultaneously premiered in nine towns in 1926) and *Mississippi* (simultaneously premiered in sixteen towns in 1930) give an indication of Kaiser's popularity all over Germany at this time.

### *Kanzlist Krehler*

*Kanzlist Krehler*, a "Tragikomödie in drei Akten", was written in 1921 and published in 1922 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). Its main Expressionist features are the theme of the "Neuer Mensch" and the use of "Telegrammstil". Kaiser saw *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, *Kanzlist Krehler* and *Nebeneinander* as a trilogy, linked by the same theme.<sup>3</sup> In each play, new possibilities are opened up for the protagonist which transcend his restricted petty-bourgeois existence. Krehler is a clerk who is thrown out of his sterile daily routine by a trivial incident. However, by

---

<sup>3</sup>See G. Kaiser, "Brief an Hans Theodor Joel," March 1924, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 583.





now, Kaiser had started to rise above Expressionism and there is some distancing here from the Kassierer in *Von morgens bis mitternachts*. Herr Rat warns Krehler against a similar fate, criticising the Kassierer for having overestimated life.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the ending of *Kanzlist Krehler* is just as pessimistic as in *Von morgens bis mitternachts*. With his ideal of living life to the full shattered, Krehler commits suicide, a failed "Neuer Mensch". Unfortunately, this play only represents a mediocre sequel to *Von morgens bis mitternachts*. The plot motivation is weak and trite (the day off work; the globe; Max's invention), the behaviour of the characters is unconvincing and the ending is contrived (the murder and suicide). One has to agree with Steffens' comment: "Kraftlos wie er [Krehler] zeigt sich in diesem Werk Kaiser selbst."<sup>5</sup> The drama conforms to the three unities and, as Kenworthy remarks, regarding its structure and technique, it "is distinguished

-----  
<sup>4</sup>Herr Rat: "Vielleicht ist auch Ihnen die Geschichte zu Ohren gekommen, dass ein Bankkassierer – alt wie Sie, erprobt wie Sie – einen sehr bedeutenden Betrag unterschlug und durchbrannte. Ursache? Erschütterung durch ein Damenbild. Die Dame warf ihn samt seinem defraudierten Geld zur Hoteltür hinaus. Aber der Kassierer war auf dem Wege – aus seiner minutenpünktlichen Regelmässigkeit in die jubilierende Unregelmässigkeit. Da wollte er das versäumte Leben in einem Tag von morgens bis mitternachts nachholen. Der Lauf hetzte ihn durch alle Quintessenz von Möglichkeiten: Ballsaal – Sechstagerennen – Heilsarmee. Im Heilsarmeelokal erschoss er sich vor versammelten Hallelujabrüdern und -schwestern. Warum? Er hatte das Leben überschätzt. Wie in jener anständigen Dame im Anfang täuschte er sich in den Erfüllungen. Es blieb alles hinter den Erwartungen zurück. Schluss: eine Kugel durch den Kopf. – – – Vor solchen Ernüchterungen möchte ich Sie bewahren" (Kaiser, *Kanzlist Krehler*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, II [Berlin: Propyläen, 1971], 166).

<sup>5</sup>Steffens, p. 114.





from the conventional only by Kaiser's characteristic diction." 6

The premiere of *Kanzlist Krehler* at the Kammerspiele des Deutschen Theaters in Berlin (14.2.1922) was the first of three Kaiser premieres that year. However, the Berlin critics were basically unfavourable towards Kaiser's text. For Ihering (281), the drama, with its hybrid mixture of Expressionist language and Naturalist milieu, was a weak, fragmentary work. Although the action seemed self-motivated, it still needed a Naturalist prop (the sun-blind) to come to a conclusion. Erich Krafft (282) considered the play insignificant, all the more so because Krehler's development merely repeated the Kassierer's fate in *Von morgens bis mitternachts*. The basic idea, which might have worked as a drama in one act, was not sufficient to sustain three acts. Hans Knudsen (283) did not think that *Kanzlist Krehler* was, in any way, an outstanding achievement in the context of Kaiser's "oeuvre", although the tight structure and purely intellectual outcome were typical of his style. He objected to the ugly compressed language, an Expressionist feature which he now regarded as out-of-date. Krafft, too, condemned the senseless distortions produced by Kaiser's rape of the German language. Ernst Heilborn (284, 285) felt that the play lacked life because Kaiser's abstract dialogue made no attempt to sound like the language of real people. He also

-----  
 6Kenworthy, p. 64. Cf. Schürer, who writes that *Kanzlist Krehler* "is not a 'Stationendrama' but a conventional family tragedy in three acts" (*Kaiser*, p. 89).



found the plot improbable and unconvincing. If Kaiser had involved himself emotionally with his own characters, the spectator might have been able to empathize with them. Then, in a state of empathy, the spectator would be less concerned with the probability of the action. However, since Kaiser was critical towards his characters, the spectator failed to identify with them and remained unconvinced. In particular, Heilborn considered Krehler's murder of Max totally unbelievable. Despite Kaiser's technical ability, the final product was too contrived. Friedrich Düsel (286) thought that the play, despite its unoriginal subject-matter, could have become, with its good beginnings in the first act and the love scenes between Max and Ida, a modest "Philisterkomödie". However, the forced attempt to raise the content to the level of tragicomedy destroyed what little comedy there was and all that remained was an unsuccessful, artificial work.

For Ihering, even the premiere of Kaiser's worst drama represented an improvement over the idiotic sexual farces which predominated in all the Berlin theatres during this unusually confused season. Still, he was not really satisfied by Heinrich Herald's production, for which George Grosz had designed the sets and costumes. The director had failed to exert enough authority in that he had not accentuated clearly enough the play's essential features. The production should have tried to overcome the stylistic contradictions of the original by presenting it dynamically





and explosively in the manner of *Von morgens bis mitternachts*. Instead, Kaiser's text was turned upside down. The contrast between Max and Krehler was not emphasized — Krehler appeared too soft and sentimental compared to Max's almost impertinent self-confidence. Paul Graetz was not particularly suited to the title role, because he was unable to bring out the play's dynamic and intellectual aspects. He lacked intensity, fantasy and hatred; instead, he was weak, sentimental and "menschlich". Ihering thought that, if Werner Krauss had played the protagonist, he would have provided a better contrast to Margarete Kupfer as Frau Krehler and Hans Brausewetter who gave a biting, aggressive performance as Max. Despite the good production, the play seemed to Heilborn even more improbable on the stage. Krafft reported that the production helped the play win loud applause from the numerous Kaiser fans present.

*Kanzlist Krehler* was also performed the same year (1922) at the Kammerspiele des Raimund-Theaters, Vienna, in a good production directed by Franz Theodor Csokor (287), and at the Munich Schaubühne. Otto Sachse (288) in Munich could barely tolerate Ida and Max, who were not types but possessed Naturalistic features. Max, whose invention was hardly convincing, was repulsive and a complete caricature. Still, Sachse liked the play because a deep, truly tragicomic message seemed to arise out of the compressed language and the distorted style. He thought that the psychologically impossible aspects of the action were only



acceptable within the framework of grotesque Expressionism. The applause for the production, with its Expressionist, moderately stylised sets and minor characters, was well deserved, although, unfortunately, the theatre was half empty.

### *Der Protagonist*

*Der Protagonist*, first written in 1920, was published in 1921 as an "Einakter" and in 1926 as "Ein Akt Oper". This was Kaiser's first collaboration with the composer Kurt Weill, who wrote the music.<sup>7</sup> However, *Der Protagonist* was not his first work to be turned into an opera, the one-act *Juana* having been published as an opera in 1925. Kaiser had also experimented with music in *Europa* (published in 1915). Yet *Der Protagonist* has most in common with the psychological dramas *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, although it does not have a female protagonist. As in these two earlier plays, the historical setting is only sketched superficially since the main concern is with a psychological problem – the conflict between inner and external reality, between "Schein" and "Sein". The protagonist is an actor who identifies so completely with his roles that he loses touch with his real self. While still playing the part of a jealous husband, he kills his sister for having lied about her lover. At the end of the

---

<sup>7</sup>According to Schürer, Kurt Weill met his future wife Lotte Lenya at Kaiser's house in Grünheide, *Kaiser*, p. 133.



play, real and feigned madness, inner and external reality, "Schein" and "Sein" are merged in the protagonist. The form is closed and there is some "Telegrammstil".

*Der Protagonist* was premiered as a play at the Lobe-Theater in Breslau (16.3.1922) and as an opera at the Dresden Staatsoper (25.3.1926). Erich Freund (289) in Breslau did not find the play particularly original and felt that the protagonist was very similar to numerous other tragic actor-figures. At least Freund anticipated the later premiere and publication of the work in a new genre, remarking that the style (the use of pantomime and the abrupt transition from the acted level to harsh reality) was similar to opera. However, the action could have been much tighter, much more logical and theatrical. Also, unfortunately, the protagonist's murder of his sister was not sufficiently motivated. Still, despite Freund's reservations, the audience applauded the production, which was considered a success.

Although there are no reviews available of the premiere of *Der Protagonist* as an opera in Dresden, Ihering referred to this performance in a later review of *Zweimal Oliver* (394). He praised Josef Gielen's lively, daring, powerful production, which pointed to the future. In particular, he liked Weill's clever musical ending which, with its fanfares, gave the impression that the real performance was now only just about to begin with the protagonist's desire, after the murder, to act a final scene merging the borders





between real and feigned madness (a scene not presented as the ending is left open). Schürer remarks that the opera was staged "successfully" in Dresden<sup>8</sup> and, in another review, Ihering (392) mentioned "die vortreffliche Vorstellung" of the work there.

*David und Goliath* (revised version of *Grossbürger Möller*)

In 1920, Kaiser revised his early comedy *Grossbürger Möller*, which had been premiered in 1915, and published it, in the same year, under the new title *David und Goliath* (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). The earlier four-act version had now become a "Komödie in drei Akten". This play belongs to a group of Kaiser comedies which have a Scandinavian setting.<sup>9</sup> Although at times contrived, *David und Goliath* is basically a conventional realistic comedy, set in a small provincial Danish town. As is so typical of Kaiser's early dramas with their shipwrecks (*Der mutige Seefahrer*; *Juana*) and inheritances (*Der Zentaur*), the action is motivated by a chance occurrence, this time a lottery ticket.<sup>10</sup> Like the *Kassierer* and *Kanzlist Krehler*, *Sophus Möller* is a petty-bourgeois official. However, in contrast, the outcome

<sup>8</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 134. Schürer dates the Dresden production of the opera on 27.3.1926 whereas Huder dates the premiere on 25.3.1926, Kaiser, *Werke*, VI, 869.

<sup>9</sup>This group includes *Der mutige Seefahrer*, *Kolportage* and *Das Los des Ossian Balvesen*. See Kenworthy, p. 190.

<sup>10</sup>The sudden acquisition of wealth is a recurring theme in Kaiser's work — cf. *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, *Der mutige Seefahrer*, *Margarine* and *Zwei Krawatten*. Lotteries also serve as plot motivation in *Zwei Krawatten*, *Der Silbersee* and *Das Los des Ossian Balvesen*.



of this comedy is not tragic because the petty-bourgeois David is able to triumph over his Goliath, the wealthy capitalist Magnussen.<sup>11</sup> The play's main weakness is the clichéd, melodramatic subplot – the love affair between Dagmar and Axel.

Although acknowledging their skilful development of an idea, Kenworthy described *Der mutige Seefahrer* and *David und Goliath* as "only slight comedies".<sup>12</sup> Schürer was critical of the early version *Grossbürger Möller*:

Kaiser's conventional comedy is tightly constructed, but it can neither stylistically nor satirically compete with Sternheim's plays. It is also flawed by repetitious dialogues and must be cut considerably for a successful performance. But it certainly shows more promise and contains more genuine humor than Kaiser's previous Naturalistic attempts.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, the final version of Kaiser's early work must be considered one of his most successful comedies.<sup>14</sup> It is basically well written and constructed, witty and yet not without serious overtones – the attack on capitalism from a petty-bourgeois perspective, although the tone of the ending

-----  
 "The same theme is touched upon in *Rektor Kleist*, although here there is no victory for the weak as the play ends tragically with Fehse's suicide. Kleist appeals to Fehse to confess his guilt (even though he is innocent) so that the strong and healthy might be defeated: "Fehse, fassen Sie sich ein Herz. Offenbaren Sie den grösseren Mut. Stellen Sie Ihre grosssprecherischen Kameraden in den Schatten. Werfen Sie die Goliathe um! – Haben Sie die Tat auch nicht auf dem Gewissen – sagen Sie trotzdem: *Ja!* – [...] – Fehse – [...] – seien wir ihnen über – drücken wir sie an die Wand – diese Prahlhänse – diese Herkulesse!" (*Rektor Kleist*, in Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, V, 261).

<sup>12</sup>Kenworthy, p. 106.

<sup>13</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 42.

<sup>14</sup>*David und Goliath* was one of those early Kaiser works which underwent many revisions. The fifth and final version, written in 1922, was published in 1923 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer) and in Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, I, 199–250.





is conciliatory rather than radically class-conscious.

According to Huder, the premiere of *David und Goliath* took place on 19.3.1922 at the Stadttheater, Minden/Westf.<sup>15</sup> The reviews of this production (291, 292) also referred to it as an Uraufführung. However, Oskar Maurus Fontana (290) referred, in December 1921, to an earlier production of *David und Goliath* at the Raimund-Theater in Vienna. He was not really convinced by Kaiser's social criticism, feeling that the attack on capitalism was not motivated by the desire for radical change of a socially committed writer. In Minden, Dr. Wolfgang Hoffmann-Harnisch's fine production was well applauded and was considered a complete success (291, 292).

*David und Goliath* was performed in Berlin on 1.11.1924 at the Wallner-Theater, which was one of Saltenburg's four stages there, together with the Lustspielhaus, the Neues Operettentheater and the Künstlertheater. Emil Lind's production was a lively public success and was greeted by unusually loud applause (294, 295, 300). The critic for the *Berliner Morgenpost* (295) was surprised that the work had not been successful earlier in the German theatres. Franz Leppmann (297), too, could not imagine why it had not been presented sooner in Berlin, as he expected that the comedy would now play to full houses. For Erich Metzger (296), this performance was the most entertaining evening which he had spent in the theatre for a long time. Mysing (300) thought

---

<sup>15</sup>This was "Fassung 3", the version revised and published in 1920. See Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 866.



that the comedy's success could be attributed partly to the fact that it was not yet a completely typical Kaiser play since it did not use "Telegrammstil" and was unusually humorous for its author. The reviewer for the Berlin *National-Zeitung* (294) felt that this was an unlikely drama for Kaiser because it was a family comedy very much in the tradition of Viennese farce. This early work, which otherwise would appear unimportant and dated in the context of Kaiser's "oeuvre", was of interest to this critic since it already contained the main features of the later Kaiser – his preoccupation with money, his technical ability, fast tempo, original ideas and concentrated style. It offered a deeper treatment of a clichéd comic theme – the sudden acquisition of wealth. Although old-fashioned, Kaiser's comedy was, with its social insights, still better than 90% of contemporary comedies.

The critic for the *Berliner Tageblatt* (302) considered the play a "Volksstück" on account of its preoccupation with money and its use of "Kitsch".<sup>16</sup> Ernst Degner (298), however, described it as better than the usual "Volksstücke". For Artur Michel (299), this highly dramatic work was unusual for a "Schwank" because of the way it combined comedy and entertainment with a deeper, serious message. He felt that *David und Goliath* might, for this reason, establish itself over many other farces in the repertoire of the German theatre. Erich Metzger praised the

-----  
<sup>16</sup>F. E. is probably Fritz Engel who was a critic for the *Berliner Tageblatt*.





play's delicious satire, its wicked, grotesque humour, the sparkling language and the concise, confident structure.

Franz Leppmann, who thought that this was a typical Kaiser drama despite its lack of "Telegrammstil", was especially impressed by the inventiveness of Kaiser's ideas here.

However, there were some dissenting voices. The reviewer for the *Deutsche Zeitung* (293) disliked the double standards of Kaiser's supporters. He felt that, if this comedy had appeared under the name of a lesser writer, it would not have been performed and would have been dismissed by these critics as styleless, empty, unfunny and tasteless. In particular, he found Kaiser's wordplay thin and laboured. Another reviewer (301) did not see this comedy as characteristic of Kaiser and described the figures as contrived and soulless.

Emil Lind's production managed to achieve the strong theatrical effects for which he was aiming (298). The curtain, depicting the horrific scene of a David bathed in red light and a Goliath with blood streaming from his brain, set the grotesque mood of the production. The stage designs were also exaggerated – the sheer wretchedness of Möller's attic offered a stark contrast to Magnussen's grand but tasteless abode (296). Mysing, however, felt that Lind, out of anxiety lest the play might appear too much like a "Volksstück", had made the production slightly too exaggerated and caricatured. Another critic (301) complained that the acting suffered because of the production's clash





of styles, because of its mixture of traditional comedy and modern "Marionettenstil". Albert Steinrück (Möller) seemed influenced by Wedekind (297); Heinz Salfner as Magnussen presented a grotesque, brutal caricature (298, 300); the minor characters were depicted successfully as "Spiessertypen" (297). The reviewer for the *National-Zeitung*, though, was critical of the acting which, at times, seemed to degenerate to provincial standards. Still, despite these reservations, Kaiser's drama achieved a powerful comic effect, to which the public success testified.

In Berlin, there were some slight qualms regarding the ethical implications of Möller's behaviour in outwitting Magnussen. Metzger enjoyed the comedy but thought that Möller was a rogue and swindler and that the play's "moral" could not be imitated in real life. Mysing found the ending more satisfying than Kaiser's usual endings – even though it was morally risqué! Elsewhere, more conservative critics in the provinces were less tolerant. Rudolf Raab, at the 1922 Karlsruhe production, disliked the tastelessness of the ending, through which Kaiser appeared to be justifying his own criminal behaviour.<sup>17</sup> Once more, Kaiser incurred the wrath of the critics in Munich. Those critics attending Kurt

-----  
<sup>17</sup>"Aus der Geschichte des Sparkassenbeamten Sophus Möller [...] hätte sich zum mindesten ein brauchbares Lustspiel formen lassen, wenn der Verf[asser], abgesehen von der saloppen Sorglosigkeit im Aufbau, nicht auch noch auf die Geschmacklosigkeit verfallen wäre, den Schluss zu einer Art Selbstverteidigung seiner sattsam bekannten persönlichen Schicksale zu benützen" (Rudolf Raab, *Die schöne Literatur*, 23, 1922, 399).



Stieler's production at the Residenz-Theater there (1925) were especially hostile towards Kaiser's drama. Dr. Eduard Scharrer rejected such a despicable comedy which proclaimed that the ends could justify even the most dubious means and which had the audacity to quote from the Biblical David and Goliath story in support of Möller's actions.<sup>18</sup> Although L. G. Oberlaender acknowledged that this production was a well-deserved success, he objected to the tasteless ending and to Möller's questionable behaviour:

Auf diese Geschmacklosigkeit und die mehr als merkwürdige Bibelauslegung näher einzugehen, ist nicht der Mühe wert. Der schwerste Mangel dieser Komödie, die in Wahrheit eine literarisch aufgeputzte Posse ist, liegt in dem moralischen Defekt. Nur seine mit Nachdruck als beschränkt und hausbacken geschilderte Frau hat eine zaghafte Missbilligung für Möllers Unsauberkeiten. Mit dessen Sophismen kann jeder Schwindler und Schieber sich als Schlaukopf brüsten.<sup>19</sup>

-----  
<sup>18</sup> "Als den Geldhunger und den Unwert des Geldes verspottende Farce könnte dieser theatralische Vorwurf akzeptiert werden, da aber dieser tatsächliche Zuchthauskandidat Möller wie der lachende Philosoph am Ende behauptet, der Zweck könnte selbst die bedenklichsten Mittel heiligen und sich schliesslich anmasst, die Bibelstelle des Kampfes zwischen David und Goliath als Beweiskraft seines Handelns vorzulesen, muss eine solche 'Komödie', die innerlich morsch und faul ist, abgelehnt werden" (Dr. Eduard Scharrer, n.d., n.s., GKC).

<sup>19</sup> L. G. Oberlaender, *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 5, 29.1.1925, p. 82.





### *Die Flucht nach Venedig*

*Die Flucht nach Venedig*, a "Schauspiel in vier Akten", was written in 1922 and published in 1923 (Berlin: Die Schmiede). It was quickly translated into English (1923) and into Czech (1924). Surprisingly, Schürer does not include this play among Kaiser's "Frauenstücke", even though it has much in common with *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus* but sees it as continuing Kaiser's "criticism of the Expressionist poet".<sup>20</sup> Like these two plays, it has a female protagonist, a small cast, a complex, tightly constructed plot and it keeps to the three unities. As well, the same complaint can be raised here which was made with regard to these earlier plays – that the action is contrived (in particular, the subplot with the Englishman's wife) and that the character motivation is, at times, unconvincing. Although not set in France, *Die Flucht nach Venedig* still has a non-German setting (Venice) and the action also takes place in the past. Again, it is only superficially an historical drama since it is concerned primarily with psychological developments and the relationship between two people (Alfred de Musset and George Sand). Once more, there is a certain amount of daring sexual content – Sand's bisexuality and lesbianism.

The main difference is that this play does not present an act of self-sacrifice on the part of the female protagonist but examines the problem of the artist, as

---

<sup>20</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 180. See also pp. 140–53.



represented by two opposing artist-types: Musset and Sand. Kenworthy, however, unlike Schürer, included *Die Flucht nach Venedig* in the same group of plays as *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, considering it also as modelled on the French "pièce de chambre".<sup>21</sup> Just as in *Die Bürger von Calais* and *Das Frauenopfer*, the treatment of history is free. Two years (1833–34) are crammed into one day and there are anachronistic references to Flaubert and Mallarmé.<sup>22</sup> At times, the language is reduced to extreme "Telegrammstil".

The premiere of *Die Flucht nach Venedig*, which was the first of three Kaiser premieres in 1923, took place at the Stadttheater (Intimes Theater), Nuremberg on 9.2.1923.<sup>23</sup>

-----  
<sup>21</sup>Kenworthy, p. 190.

<sup>22</sup>See Kenworthy, p. 165 and Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 242, note 22. Kaiser, in his essay "Historientreue" (1923), considered it the poet's job to order and make sense of the chaos of history. He justified his own use of anachronisms in *Die Flucht nach Venedig* and *Gilles und Jeanne* by arguing that the poet has the right to modify historical facts according to his artistic purpose: "Wenn Flaubert das Unglück hatte, einige Jahrzehnte zu spät aus Ägypten heimzukehren, so beschönige ich das Malheur mit glättenden Händen durch meine nachgesetzte Datierung. Denn dichterisch-sachlich gehört er in die Sphäre der früheren George Sand hinein. Darauf kommt es an; nicht, was sich kalendermässig ereignet, ist wichtig –, sondern was geistig funktioniert gilt. Man muss Gefühl für den Kalender haben und ihn zart korrigieren. [...] Fehlte mir ein Stern – ein Erdteil: ich würde ihn entdecken" (*Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 577–78).

<sup>23</sup>Georg Decker (304), in his review of the Nuremberg premiere, reported that there was a premiere of the play on the same day in Prague. Dr. Viktor Lederer, in an undated review in the GKC, also referred to an Uraufführung of *Die Flucht nach Venedig* at the Deutsches Theater in Prague, with Blanche Dergan as Sand. Coincidentally, Kaiser was in love with the same Blanche Dergan (1892–1957), an Hungarian actress, when he became interested in the subject-matter for this play – see Klaus Petersen, "Das Wort tötet das Leben. Möglichkeiten des Künstlertums in Georg Kaisers Drama *Die Flucht nach Venedig*," *Colloquia Germanica*, 11 (1978), 149–65. Huder dates the premiere of the Czech translation of the play at the Ständetheater, Prague, on 8.3.1924 – Kaiser,





The reaction of the local critics was mixed and the public response rather cool (305). One reviewer (305) left the theatre feeling empty despite all the fine-sounding language. Although he found the play intellectual, clever and of some interest, it was not exactly enthralling. Georg Decker (304) was more favourable. He considered the drama worthwhile because it contained more passion and feeling than was usual for Kaiser. The subject-matter seemed to have made this normally rational, cool playwright more responsive to his impulses and emotions. Consequently, there were many scenes not at all typical of Kaiser. Also, as was to be expected, *Die Flucht nach Venedig* was technically accomplished. Jo Lherman[n] (303), who praised the play's closed, concentrated form and its finely crafted structure, saw the drama as rising artistically above Kaiser's tendentious, programmatic political works. Even the inadequate performance was unable to weaken for him the play's powerful effect. Lherman[n] thought that Merck's production was not tight enough and that Gerth (Musset) was poor. Ernestine Costa's Sand was effective and praiseworthy, although the Munich actress did not succeed completely in filling this puppet-like figure with life (303, 305).

Shortly after the Nuremberg premiere, *Die Flucht nach Venedig* was presented on 27.3.1923 for the first time in Berlin at the Kammerspiele des Deutschen Theaters. However, this performance was far from an overwhelming success. On

---

<sup>23</sup> (cont'd) *Werke*, VI, 871.





the whole, the Berlin critics viewed the play unfavourably. Mysing (309) was surprised that authors were still treating a theme as dated as the Musset-Sand love affair, about which so much had already been written. He was also sceptical of writers who presented their fellow writers on the stage, because they tended towards a self-indulgence which undermined dramatic effectiveness. He thought that Kaiser's *Die Flucht nach Venedig* was only a mediocre work and that it contained two basic mistakes. Firstly, the Musset-Sand conflict was not dramatic enough to sustain four acts. As a result, Kaiser had filled out the play with the rather unconvincing subplot (the Engländer). Secondly, Kaiser's style seemed unsuited to the historical setting. His frantic "Telegrammstil" was inappropriate to a period noted for its loquaciousness and sentimentality. For Fritz Engel (310), Kaiser's subject-matter possessed autobiographical value. He saw the play as a self-defence by Kaiser, as a defence of the cool artist-type. Kaiser would have preferred to be like his Musset since he was usually taken for a George Sand. The drama itself, with its dated techniques (characters not noticing each other on the stage; the "Lauschszenen") and its uneven language (partly long-winded and bombastic, partly compressed to the point of incomprehensibility), was a lost cause. Ernst Heilborn (306) felt that the play's final sentence ("Das Wort tötet das Leben") was equally applicable to Kaiser's "Präparaten-Dramatik". Once more, Heilborn complained that Kaiser's style was not that of a



writer who really abandoned himself to his characters. For Friedrich Düsel (307), Kaiser was mistaken in trying to present his literary theme in a literary style. Such a subject-matter needed to pulse with life, if the figures were not to remain schematic.

According to Engel, Bernhard Reich's production could not save the play. Mysing was surprised by how little Reich had done to make the text more effective and felt that the atmosphere of Venice had not been brought out enough. The production's only consolation was the acting, especially the talented performance of Agnes Straub, who seemed very suited to her role as George Sand (308, 309). There was just some thin applause and this was mainly intended for the actors (309, 310).

In 1925, the reviewer for the *Allgemeine Rundschau* (311) objected very much to *Die Flucht nach Venedig*, when it was produced at the Munich Schauspielhaus. He disliked Kaiser's distorted, historically incorrect treatment of his protagonists, which reduced Sand to an unscrupulous whore and Musset to a weakling and which presented a perverted relationship between Sand and Das deutsche Fräulein. For once, Kaiser had created a boring work, mainly because of its "Papiersprache". Also, this critic could not interest himself in the characters, who lacked life.

Agnes Straub, who had played Sand in Berlin, appeared in a "Gastspiel" at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus in 1929. The reviewer for the *Düsseldorfer Lokalzeitung* (312) thought





that such a part must have been appealing to an actress like Straub, who was able to maintain a middle position between intellect and passion. There was a certain ironic superiority in every situation so that she did not abandon herself completely to her emotions. For this critic, the play's weakness was the contradiction between its elevated language and its realistic psychological detail. Also, the realistic acting of the guest performers was totally inappropriate. This "Gastspiel" proved disappointing because the acting in general was only mediocre.

When *Die Flucht nach Venedig* was recorded as an "Hörspiel", Agnes Straub was chosen for the female lead since her performance as Sand in Berlin was considered one of her greatest successes. If any actress could present this difficult role effectively on the radio, then it had to be Agnes Straub.<sup>24</sup>

-----  
<sup>24</sup>"Dass es nur einer wahrhaften Menschenstellerin von ganz eigenartigen und ungewöhnlichen Fähigkeiten gelingen kann, diesen gleichsam abseitigen Frauencharakter in wirklich überzeugender Weise zu verkörpern – das dürfte schon nach diesen kurzen Darlegungen ohne weiteres einleuchten. Aber gerade Agnes Straub hat bereits bewiesen, in wie vollendeter Weise sie einer solchen Aufgabe gewachsen ist. Innerhalb der gewiss überreichen Zahl ihrer Erfolge war gerade diese Rolle einer der allergrössten – darüber ist die gesamte Berliner Presse bei den Aufführungen des Werkes im Deutschen Theater ausnahmsweise einmal völlig einig gewesen. [...] wenn es selbst Agnes Straub versagt wäre, die Schwierigkeiten dieser Rolle im Hörspiel voll zu bewältigen – dann gäbe es eben nach menschlichem Ermessen zur Zeit überhaupt keine Darstellerin, die dazu fähig wäre" (W. Z., *Die Dresdner Mirag*, n.d., GKC).



## *Gilles und Jeanne*

*Gilles und Jeanne*, a "Bühnenspiel in drei Teilen", was written in 1922 and published in 1923 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). It was dedicated to Fritz Stiedry.<sup>25</sup> This play is one of Kaiser's later works which has caused problems of categorisation for his critics. At times, it is difficult to decide exactly which of these later plays should still be considered Expressionist in the style of Kaiser's earlier Expressionist dramas: *Die Bürger von Calais*, *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, the *Gas*-trilogy and *Hölle Weg Erde*. Kenworthy describes *Gilles und Jeanne* as "in many ways, one of Kaiser's most expressionistic dramas" and thought that here Kaiser was paying "tribute to the mode of the Expressionist 'ecstatic' theatre".<sup>26</sup> Likewise, Schürer refers to *Gilles und Jeanne* as "one of Kaiser's latest but decidedly Expressionistic plays".<sup>27</sup> He considered it and *Nebeneinander* "Kaiser's last original Expressionist plays".<sup>28</sup> However, in contrast, Steffens writes: "*Gilles und Jeanne* (1922) und *Gats* (1924) haben mit 'Expressionismus' nichts mehr zu tun".<sup>29</sup> Paulsen remarks accurately that the label "Expressionist" is often applied to later dramas like *Gilles*

---

<sup>25</sup>Dr. Fritz Stiedry (1883–1968), the composer and conductor, was a friend of Kaiser's – see Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 133. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine* reported, on 11.3.1958, that Stiedry had interrupted his work as a conductor for the New York Metropolitan Opera to finish his adaptation of *Der gerettete Alkibiades* as an opera. I have no evidence whether this opera was finished.

<sup>26</sup>Kenworthy, p. 70.

<sup>27</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 120.

<sup>28</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 123.

<sup>29</sup>Steffens, p. 99.





und Jeanne unthinkingly:

Danach [1920] schwoll die expressionistische Welle bei Kaiser wieder ab. In *Gilles und Jeanne* (1922) und *Gats* (1924), die man gewöhnlich bedenkenlos den expressionistischen Dichtungen zuordnet, ist das Expressionistische bereits zu einem blossen technischen Hilfsmittel geworden, und auch das verschwindet nach 1924 fast spurlos aus Kaisers Werk.<sup>30</sup>

Although *Gilles und Jeanne* contains many Expressionist elements, it is too stylistically complex to be labelled simply an "Expressionist" work. It is really a stylistic hybrid, containing an amalgamation of features not only from Kaiser's Expressionist dramas but also from his "Frauenstücke" and from the group of plays which includes *Die jüdische Witwe*, *König Hahnrei* and *Der gerettete Alkibiades*. The extreme "Telegrammstil", the mixture of reality, mysticism and the visionary, the light and colour symbolism and the theme of regeneration are all features to be found in his major Expressionist dramas. The play shows how the vilest of men, Gilles de Rais, is transformed by the purity of Jeanne d'Arc. As a "Neuer Mensch", he confesses to his crimes and dies a second Christ. Schürer says of the ending: "Gilles's sudden elevation is a shock for the audience, since the combination of idealistic messianism and superhuman criminality is repulsive."<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup>W. Paulsen, *Georg Kaiser. Die Perspektiven seines Werkes* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1960), p. 55.

<sup>31</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 122. Likewise, when *Gilles und Jeanne* was staged for the first time in Halberstadt (1926), the critic for the *Halberstädter Zeitung* (322) complained that Gilles's crude, sensual lust for Jeanne made his transformation unconvincing. The effectiveness of the transformation, as presented by Walther Süssenguth in the main role, was undermined by his earlier animalistic





Kenworthy saw the play as a series of stations in the manner of *Von morgens bis mitternachts*.<sup>32</sup> Its use of open form within a tripartite structure can also be found in *Hölle Weg Erde* and *Der gerettete Alkibiades*

Despite not having closed form, *Gilles und Jeanne* still has several features in common with "Frauenstücke" like *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus*. Although it is concerned primarily with Gilles's process of regeneration, there is a leading female figure. Also, Jeanne's self-sacrifice and idealised purity is very similar to the elevated behaviour of the Gräfin and of Sylvette. Again, there is a French historical setting, but once more Kaiser's preoccupation with psychological developments and relationships predominates. There is a similar combination of the erotic and macabre as in *Der Brand im Opernhaus*. In common with *Die jüdische Witwe*, *König Hahnrei* and *Der gerettete Alkibiades*, *Gilles und Jeanne* reexamines a traditional theme – this time, the Jeanne d'Arc legend. Together with these plays, it has open form, a massive cast and a certain amount of background colour, of pageantry, pomp and ceremony. Kaiser's essay "Historientreue" applies, as well, to *Gilles und Jeanne* – there is an anachronistic reference to the discovery of America.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Jeanne's mission is not to save France but to transform the vilest of men, Gilles.

-----  
<sup>31</sup> (cont'd) behaviour.

<sup>32</sup> Kenworthy, p. 70.

<sup>33</sup> See Kaiser, "Historientreue," in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 578.



*Gilles und Jeanne* was premiered on 2.6.1923 at the Altes Theater, Leipzig, where the local critics had mixed feelings.<sup>34</sup> This treatment of the Joan of Arc theme made Erich Michael (313) now appreciate Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans*. He could only enjoy Kaiser's first three scenes, despite some grotesque moments, and was bitterly disappointed by the rest. This contrived work, with its pipe-smoking king and references to American brothels, was a lost cause. In contrast, Georg Witkowski (314), who described Kaiser favourably as "der Sudermann des Expressionismus" on account of his theatricality, considered the two court scenes the highpoints of the play, especially the intense third part with its ceremony and careful build-up. However, Kaiser's abundant "lyrische Expektorationen" undermined the dramatic effectiveness of *Gilles und Jeanne*. He felt that the second part would have been improved if, instead of Gilles's descriptions of his desires and disappointments regarding the six false Jeannes, his experiences with just one of them had actually been depicted. The use of monologues was inappropriate and ineffective here. Although this play did not have lasting value, Witkowski was still grateful for such a drama compared to other new contemporary works. For Hugo Grothe (315), this was the most enthralling and satisfactory premiere of the year in the municipal theatre. Despite the torturously contrived action and characterisation, despite

<sup>34</sup>Schürer dates the premiere of *Gilles und Jeanne* incorrectly as taking place in 1924, *Kaiser*, p. 16.





Gilles's long, hysterical monologues, the theme of *Gilles und Jeanne* was powerful and stimulating. The audience's loud applause seemed more intended for Dr. Kronacher's accomplished production rather than the author. Grothe praised Lothar Körner's performance as Gilles and Kronacher's fine presentation of the masses in the final court scene. Michael, who was impressed by the production and the acting, felt that the play was successful because its combination of seriousness and the grotesque appealed to contemporary theatregoers.

In August 1924, Wilhelm Dieterle, a former actor for Max Reinhardt, opened his short-lived Dramatisches Theater in Berlin with a production of *Gilles und Jeanne*.<sup>35</sup> Compared to other commercial theatres, this was to be an idealistic enterprise which aimed to present struggling and unknown playwrights (319). Needless to say, Dieterle's theatre soon went bankrupt (321)! On the whole, the Berlin critics were negatively disposed towards Kaiser's text. Ihering (316) dismissed *Gilles und Jeanne* as a regressive step for Kaiser and as a sterile minor work. This modern dramatist was approaching here the extravagant bombast of Grabbe and the nebulous hysteria of Wagner. Ihering felt that, as in Grabbe's *Don Juan und Faust*, Kaiser's choice of subject-matter was too extreme. Indeed, the contrast between

-----

<sup>35</sup>Rühle first dates this production on 29.8.1924, but refers incorrectly to it as an Uraufführung, p. 505. Later, he gives the date 28.8.1924, although he now acknowledges the earlier Leipzig premiere, p. 703. None of the reviews offers an exact date for the production.



the protagonists was far too great. Because they were such total opposites, there was no interaction between Gilles and Jeanne; because they were on such different tracks, they could only offer two monologues. From Wagner, Kaiser had borrowed the motif of sacrifice and redemption. Ihering thought that Kaiser's technique had been unable to overcome these dated features and that there was too much of a contradiction between the modern style and old-fashioned content. Mysing (318) complained that Kaiser's play, with its mixture of Naturalist, romantic-mystical and parodistic elements, was over-rational and over-contrived. This work, which lacked depth and plausibility, was too confused to satisfy an audience with simple tastes. Despite its many theatrically effective features, Mysing concluded that the necessary stylistic unity was missing. For Max Meyerfeld (319), Kaiser's reduction of a major historical event to the simplest erotic formula betrayed his lack of respect for history. He thought that Kaiser should have tried to arouse the spectator's sympathy for a monster like Gilles. However, one was not moved at all emotionally by this drama. Another reviewer (321) condemned *Gilles und Jeanne*, despite its many theatrical effects, as a boring affair on account of Kaiser's cool detachment from his own work.

Alfred Mühr (317), who was doubtful of the lasting literary value of *Gilles und Jeanne*, described Karl Vogt's production as simple, conscientious and effective. However, although the masses were lively, he would have preferred the



rather tame peasants to have been presented more aggressively and threateningly. There was praise for Hans Poelzig's simple, atmospheric sets which toned down Kaiser's intellectual excesses with warm colours (317, 319). Ihering was impressed by the seriousness of the acting and considered the production a good beginning for the new theatre. Wilhelm Dieterle (Gilles), in particular, was assured and very talented. This was considered the best performance of the evening, although the ensemble was generally of a high standard (317, 318, 319). Dieterle's Gilles was sentimental rather than daemonic (318). Hubert von Meyerinck presented a caricatured king – simple, effeminate and with a squeaky voice (317). Maria Eis, who was too weak and monotonous, offered the least satisfying performance (316, 317).

According to Mysing, the public seemed rather disappointed at the end of the performance and their applause could have been louder. He attributed the blame to Kaiser's text – its weaknesses were too obvious and it could not be considered one of his best dramas. Meyerfeld described the public response as merely an "Achtungserfolg". Another critic (320) reported that, despite the good production, the audience lost interest more and more towards the end of the evening because of Kaiser's extremely confused plot which was overburdened with mystical, erotic and political elements.





Surprisingly, taking into consideration Kaiser's earlier problems with the censors and with moralistic critics, none of the reviews in my possession raised any prudish objections to the play's mixture of the macabre and the erotic.

### *Nebeneinander*

*Nebeneinander*, "Volksstück 1923 in fünf Akten", was written and published in 1923 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). It represented a new departure for Kaiser, who offers here three simultaneous plots side by side. Each of the five acts in the symmetrically constructed work contains three parallel scenes. The first plot is a typically Expressionist "Stationendrama" which depicts the various stages in the downfall of a "Neuer Mensch". Once more, small beginnings have massive implications. The Pfandleiher, on discovering a letter from a customer to his former lover, is suddenly thrown out of his normal routine. The natural urge of this "Neuer Mensch" to help a fellow man, even though a perfect stranger, is reminiscent of the Spazierer's behaviour in *Hölle Weg Erde*. This plot is typically Expressionist with its open form, its types, its themes (the "Neuer Mensch"), its "Telegrammstil", its topicality and social criticism – the pawnshop is a very apt symbol for such bad times, for such a period of poverty and rampant inflation. The second plot, which shows Luise's romance with the engineer Franz



Krüger after she has been jilted by Neumann, is a parody of the sentimental, bourgeois country idyll. The third plot, depicting the shady business dealings of the unscrupulous opportunist Neumann, is nearer to the "Schieberwelt" of Carl Sternheim. The rise of this con-man contrasts completely with the Pfandleiher's downfall. Neumann (note the name!) represents the modern speculator type who has replaced the "Neuer Mensch"; he is the heartless type who can succeed even during such dire inflationary times – "der Typ, der durchkommt".<sup>36</sup>

Schürer describes *Nebeneinander* and *Gilles und Jeanne* as "Kaiser's last original Expressionist plays".<sup>37</sup> However, *Nebeneinander* transcends Expressionism both stylistically and thematically. The three subplots each have their own individual style and only the Pfandleiher plot can be considered Expressionist. In addition, Kaiser distances the spectator from the "Neuer Mensch" in two ways. Firstly, the Pfandleiher gains insight into his own behaviour during the course of the action.<sup>38</sup> He criticises his unthinking

-----  
<sup>36</sup>Kaiser, *Nebeneinander*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, II, 342.

<sup>37</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 123.

<sup>38</sup>Kaiser noted this difference between the Pfandleiher and the protagonists of *Von morgens bis mitternachts* and *Kanzlist Krehler*: "*Nebeneinander* ist Endstück einer Trilogie, die nicht gleichen Stoff und gleiche Figuren verbindet, sondern derselbe Aufruf dröhnt dreimal: aus *Von morgens bis mitternachts* – *Kanzlist Krehler* – *Nebeneinander*. Dreimal springt die Mittelperson das besondere Ereignis an – mit simpelstem Zufall stösst es sie aus ihrem Alltag, staunend in Möglichkeiten von unermesslicher Weite. Zu keinem Ziel laufen Kassierer und Kanzlist – beide stürzen in die Verzweiflung der Untat ab. Doch der Pfandleiher erreicht den Gipfel, der Ausblick zulässt" ("Brief an Hans Theodor Joel," March 1924, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, IV, 583).





idealism, realising that he has over-reacted and considering himself "einen halben Narrenhans".<sup>39</sup> However, he is not bitter, he understands that it is too early to change the world and commits suicide so that what little idealism he still has will not be destroyed. Kaiser's treatment of the "Neuer Mensch" is realistic; utopianism is no longer possible now. The Pfandleiher is an exception in a world dominated by the Neumann type, in a ruthless, uncaring society, typified by the slogan "jeder gegen jeden – knock-out!".<sup>40</sup> He dies an isolated figure, as society at large is indifferent to his problems. Indeed, it is highly symbolic that the "Neuer Mensch" is destroyed and that Neumann prospers. Secondly, we are distanced from the Pfandleiher's actions by the play's structure. Because of the dramatic irony generated by the two other simultaneous plots, we are aware, all the time, of the pointlessness of his behaviour. Moreover, the happy ending of the Luise plot with her marriage to the engineer emphasizes the sheer absurdity of the Pfandleiher's efforts. With *Nebeneinander*, Kaiser rejects his earlier Expressionist idealism. In a later remark, Schürer saw *Nebeneinander* as Kaiser's first step towards greater realism, towards "Idealistische Sachlichkeit".<sup>41</sup> Steffens writes:

*Nebeneinander* (1923) ist Neue Sachlichkeit und ebenso wie *Silbersee* (1932) die Lösung eines im Expressionismus gestellten Problems ausserhalb des Expressionismus: die persönliche Verantwortung des

<sup>39</sup>Kaiser, *Nebeneinander*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, II, 337.

<sup>40</sup>Kaiser, *Nebeneinander*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, II, 327.

<sup>41</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, pp. 128–29.



Menschen im gesellschaftlichen Prozess und in der Staatlichkeit wird neu betont, die passiv-verschwärmte Utopie des 'vom Ich zum Wir' einer Revision unterworfen.<sup>42</sup>

Like *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, it is also very much a Berlin play. Without doubt, on account of its stylistic accomplishment and thematic depth, *Nebeneinander* must be considered one of Kaiser's major dramas of the 1920's.

*Nebeneinander* was premiered at the Lustspielhaus Die Truppe in Berlin on 3.11.1923. Rühle, who described it as "eine schmerzlich-ironische Paraphrase zu *Hölle Weg Erde*",<sup>43</sup> reports that Die Truppe (founded by Berthold Viertel and Reinhard Bruck) was, with Heinrich George's "Schauspielertheater" and Jo Lhermann's "Das Theater", one of a number of short-lived "Schauspielergemeinschaften" which had been created in opposition to the artistic stagnation of the conventional theatres. The Berlin theatres were going through a crisis in 1923 – audiences were poor, trivial plays predominated and film-work was disrupting the ensembles. Die Truppe presented eight productions during the six months of its existence.<sup>44</sup> This premiere of *Nebeneinander* was one of Kaiser's greatest successes in Berlin (323, 324, 340); Jacobsohn (325) considered it Die Truppe's first artistic success.<sup>45</sup> However, by now

-----  
<sup>42</sup>Steffens, pp. 99–100.

<sup>43</sup>Rühle, p. 183.

<sup>44</sup>See Rühle, p. 425 and pp. 480–81.

<sup>45</sup>According to Rühle, this premiere of *Nebeneinander* "brachte für Kaiser den ersten populären Erfolg in Berlin" (p. 481). However, he also describes the 1919 Volksbühne production of *Gas I* as achieving "den von Kaiser lange gesuchten Publikumserfolg in Berlin" (p. 124). Cf. reviews nos. 8, 9, 75.





Expressionism seemed out of favour. Whereas the public were indifferent towards the tragedy of Kaiser's "Neuer Mensch", they were delighted by the roguish Neumann (324). According to Ihering (340), Rudolf Forster achieved his breakthrough in Berlin with this role.

Still, the critics had mixed feelings towards Kaiser's text. Hans Knudsen (327) dismissed the play as an unnecessary, mediocre work which any Expressionist Sudermann could have written. There were complaints that Kaiser's superficial treatment of his themes offered no deep insights into contemporary life and that, as usual, his initial idea was better than the end-result (326). Another reviewer (328), who believed traditionally in organic form and a selective artistic process, objected to Kaiser's unrestrained fantasy. This grotesque, tasteless, Expressionist drama only gave a distorted caricature of the contemporary period. He concluded that a writer like Kaiser should refrain from moralising and writing "Volksstücke". Jacobsohn, for whom this playwright's hysterical protagonists had started to become monotonous, thought that Kaiser had descended from his rarefied heights with this play and now had both feet planted on the ground. Moreover, Kaiser had made a major advance in that he had not resorted to pathos in presenting the Pfandleiher's fate. For Emil Faktor (323), "*Nebeneinander* was successful not because it

-----  
 \*Faktor remarks in this review that *Die jüdische Witwe* had still not been performed. However, he was unaware of its 1921 premiere in Meiningen.





was of higher literary quality than previous works – indeed, plays like *Von morgens bis mitternachts* were richer – but because of its structure. Here, Kaiser had been able to develop his themes to a conclusion and the form was not over-complex and confused. Yet Faktor had some quibbles. He found the Pfandleiher's fate improbable because there were not that many pawn-brokers who would abandon their business to save a fellow human being; the Neumann plot was sharply drawn but cheap at times; the Luise plot, with its platitudes and homely wisdom, was weak and unsatisfactory. Still, Kaiser was an "Aktualitätsgenie" and the abundance of his themes was apparent.

Berthold Viertel's production, with its spirited acting, was loud and frenzied (323, 328). George Grosz's stylised sets were colourful and aggressive (323, 324).<sup>47</sup> In particular, the police-station was distinguished by a red gallows (324). Ludwig Sternaux (324)<sup>48</sup> was disturbed by Viertel's realistic presentation of the characters, which contradicted Grosz's caricatured sets. Although acknowledging the liveliness of the production within each scene, Jacobsohn complained that Grosz's individual setting for each scene destroyed the performance's overall tempo. He would have preferred no sets at all to the fourteen pauses between the fifteen scenes, which, because there was no

-----  
<sup>47</sup>There are two photographs of Grosz's sets in Steffens, p. 134.

<sup>48</sup>Ludwig Sternaux (1885–1938) wrote theatre reviews for the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* and the *Berlin Tag*. See Rühle, p. 1176.



"Drehbühne", destroyed the atmosphere and the rhythm of the production. At least the cast presented a wide range of authentic, sharply-drawn contemporary types, even if Forster was too aristocratic and not "Berliner" enough for his part. Other critics (324, 326) were not really satisfied by the ensemble in general which was only mediocre. Nevertheless, the public success was not to be denied.

The following year (1924) witnessed performances of *Nebeneinander* at the Munich Kammerspiele and at the Raimund-Theater in Vienna, where it was favourably received. There was lively applause because the audience seemed pleased that they had been able to understand relatively easily a drama by Georg Kaiser. Alfred Polgar (329) also enjoyed this stimulating, entertaining play and was very amused by the Neumann scenes. Although the sets were too crude and overdone, Dr. Beer's was a spirited, intense, colourful production. Pallenberg was impressive as the Pfandleiher. Just as Neumann had been acclaimed in Berlin, the critic for the *Allgemeine Rundschau* (330) in Munich described this unscrupulous con-man as a marvellous caricature, but was unmoved by the Pfandleiher's tragedy. This excellent production, in which Marlé offered a fine performance in the main role, was a success.<sup>49</sup>

George Grosz's set designs were used again when *Nebeneinander* appeared at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus (16.4.1925). By now, the play had been performed in numerous

---

<sup>49</sup>M., n.d., n.s., GKC.





theatres (332) and had been presented earlier in Düsseldorf by Saladin Schmitt's troupe from Bochum. However, Felix Emmel's production was considered better, mainly because of Friedrich Rosenthal's excellent, convincing performance as the Pfandleiher (331). The problems, which Grosz's sets had caused in Berlin (the slow scene-changes), were resolved in Düsseldorf. On the basis of Grosz's designs, Franz Mertz had constructed sets which could be quickly assembled. The production, using a "Drehbühne", was able to maintain a lively tempo. As well, slides added to the effect (333). Also in contrast to Berlin, the Pfandleiher dominated the performance and not Neumann (332). Friedrich Rosenthal's powerfully tragic performance was the highpoint of the evening (333). The critic for the *Düsseldorfer Zeitung* (332) was able to empathize with this moving figure. Because the inflationary period was over, *Nebeneinander* was now considered dated and only of literary-historical value (333). Still, Emmel's impressive production, with its capable cast (334), was performed thirteen times and was a deserved success.<sup>50</sup> The critic for *Freiheit* could not really explain why Kaiser's plays were successful; they were applauded especially by the bourgeoisie, who seemed unaffected by his satire.<sup>51</sup>

-----  
<sup>50</sup>anon., *Germania*, 20.5.1925.

<sup>51</sup>"Worin das Geheimnis des Erfolges der Theaterstücke von Georg Kaiser liegt, ist schwer zu sagen. Will Kaiser das Bürgertum frozzeln, indem er ihm die Bestandteile der heutigen Gesellschaft unter die Nase hält? Und trotzdem – gerade das Bürgertum stellt seine eifrigsten Verehrer. Es scheint allerdings, als ob sie die höhnende Lauge nicht beisst, mit der Kaiser seine Stücke übergiesst. So war es



When *Nebeneinander* was produced the following month (May 1925) for the first time in Cologne at the Schauspielhaus, one critic (335) felt that it had arrived there too late. With the stabilisation of the mark there had also been a stabilisation of moral values, so that shady dealers like Neumann no longer had the same resonance. Since it was so indebted to the "Schieberjahr" 1923, the only possible season for producing the play was 1923-24. Just as in Düsseldorf, this critic in Cologne considered *Nebeneinander*, in 1925, merely of literary-historical value. Dr. Walter Schmits (337), who was very hostile towards the play, found the Neumann plot boring and out-of-date. He thought that such an insignificant, contrived work had only been performed because of Kaiser's name and because of the Berlin critics who, out of touch with the educated public at large, had made Kaiser more important than he really deserved. For another reviewer in Cologne (336), the disjointed structure of *Nebeneinander*, with its three plot strands, threatened to destroy the audience's identification with the Pfandleiher's warm humanity. In addition, the satire and social criticism of the two other subplots was not biting enough.

Otto Liebscher's lively, colourful, fast-moving production presented the play like a revue (335). Dr. Hermann Unger's clever music was adapted to the different settings — the Neumann scenes were accompanied by modern

---

<sup>5</sup> '(cont'd) auch bei der Erstaufführung von *Nebeneinander*" (anon., *Freiheit*, 23.4.1925).





dance and jazz music, the Luise scenes by sentimental pseudo-folksongs and the music for the Pfandleiher's scenes was more introspective (335, 336). To emphasize the play's cinematic qualities, slides were projected onto the curtain, listing Kaiser's works and indicating the settings of the various scenes (335, 338). The acting was generally good and, although the audience were initially restrained, there was louder applause at the end, mainly for the fine production (338). Wolf Benekendorff as the Pfandleiher was applauded the most (335, 336).

The main problem for the many directors of *Nebeneinander* was deciding on a suitable stage design. Grosz's individualised sets had been criticised in Berlin because the fourteen scene-changes destroyed the rhythm of the premiere. In contrast, Felix Zimmermann (339), attending a second production of the play directed by Berthold Viertel, this time on 10.12.1925, suggested that the play's title should not be ignored. He would have liked an experimental production, in which the stage was divided into three parts, with each section presenting a different setting – on the left part of the stage, the Pfandleiher action, in the middle, the Neumann plot and on the right, the Luise plot. This "Simultantheater" would allow the scenes to be presented very swiftly, as scene-changes could be indicated simply by a change of lighting. It would also be possible for two scenes to be presented simultaneously, with the dialogue of one scene filling out the pauses in the





dialogue of another scene on the stage at the same time. For Zimmermann, the play became too disjointed when the fifteen scenes were presented consecutively. Of course, Berthold Viertel's production was unable to present this "Simultantheater". Elsewhere, Franz Sondinger was fortunate in that the Theater in der Klosterstrasse, where he produced the play in 1926, had two side stages which he used in addition to the main stage.<sup>52</sup> Erich Ziegel's production in Hamburg only used partial, representative sets, which allowed extremely quick scene-changes<sup>53</sup> and Dr. Thur Himmighoffen's production had an unusual stage design:

Hans Wildermann hatte hierzu ein eigenartiges Bühnenbild entworfen. Der Schauplatz zerfiel in zwei Teile, die sich im Hintergrunde im rechten Winkel trafen. Jeder in einem Holzrahmen schräg stehend. Links war das Zimmer des Schleuseninspektors, rechts die Wohnung Borsigs. Bei den Umwandlungen klappte man einfach die Holzrahmen auseinander und hatte dann Pfandhaus, Kasino, Pension oder Polizeirevier. Aber selbst der schnelle Szenenwechsel konnte über die innere Zerrissenheit des Werkes nicht hinwegtäuschen.<sup>54</sup>

Provincial critics had problems deciding whether Kaiser's subtitle describing the play as a "Volksstück" was really applicable or not. Schmits (337) thought that it was called a "Volksstück" because, like *Kolportage*, it partly contained parodistically sentimental "Kitsch". Zimmermann (339) felt that Kaiser was not naive enough or involved emotionally enough to write a proper "Volksstück". There was

-----

<sup>52</sup>H. S-l., n.d., n.s., GKC. Although this review does not give any more details, there was a Theater in der Klosterstrasse in Berlin.

<sup>53</sup>M. A. M., n.d., n.s., GKC.

<sup>54</sup>anon., n.d., n.s., GKC.



some doubt whether Kaiser intended this subtitle seriously or ironically. The reviewer for the *Allgemeine Rundschau* (330) in Munich was not sure whether the subtitle was a joke or whether it was being used to justify the play's loose form. Another critic described *Nebeneinander* as "zum Teil Volksstück, zum Teil Parodie des Volksstücks".<sup>55</sup> In Essen, Kaiser's drama was interpreted as a satire on the moralising tendencies of the traditional "Volksstück" because Kaiser's sympathies rested ultimately with Neumann.<sup>56</sup>

September 1931 saw the return of *Nebeneinander* to Berlin where it was produced, this time, by Karlheinz Martin at the Volksbühne. Erich Burger (341) considered the play, despite its technical virtuosity and skilful structure, no longer specially relevant. In particular, the main characters (the Pfandleiher, Luise and Neumann) seemed dated. For the critic from *Westermanns Monatshefte* (342), this work had lost its relevance because its content lacked lasting value. Looking back, Ihering (340) saw *Nebeneinander*, despite the Luise plot which belonged more to

-----  
<sup>55</sup> M. A. M., n.d., n.s., GKC.

<sup>56</sup> "Ein Volksstück nennt Kaiser sein raffiniert geschürztes Triptychon. Aber es ist ihm, dem nichts heilig ist, wohl nicht so ganz ernst mit dieser Bezeichnung, und man hat eher den Eindruck, dass es ihm hier um eine Satire auf die moralisierende Tendenz des guten alten Volksstückes zu tun ist. Denn das eine steht doch wohl fest, Kaisers Sympathien sind letzten Endes nicht bei dem alten Pfandverleiher, der an seiner idealen Forderung zugrunde geht, sondern bei dem schnoddrigen Schieber Neumann, der sein Mädel sitzen lässt und es zum 'Generaldirektor' einer etwas anrühigen Filmgesellschaft bringt. Diese Szenen sind dem Verfasser denn auch am besten gelungen. Hier entwirft er ein prägnantes, aber treffendes Zeitbild [...]" (anon., n.d., n.s., GKC).





the realm of literary parody, as the beginning of the "Zeitstück". Karlheinz Martin's production tried to modernise Kaiser's text by transferring the 1923 setting to the present. For this reason, he added features typical of 1931 — there was now an interest in making talking pictures and recent hit songs were played. Ihering described the production as a failed experiment since he felt that Martin had made a basic mistake in attempting to update the drama to 1931. If it had been presented as a comedy on inflation, it might still have worked. However, the scenes were much too weak for 1931 and Kaiser would have presented everything differently, if he had wanted to portray this period. Although there was a fine cast, the production was not a success. Peter Lorre did not offer one of his best performances as the Pfandleiher and Ernst Busch was out of place as Neumann (340, 341). The public's hesitant response to the play confirmed that it was not particularly relevant to 1931 (341).

### *Kolportage*

*Kolportage*, a "Komödie in einem Vorspiel und drei Akten nach zwanzig Jahren", was first written in 1923–24 and published in 1924 (Berlin: Die Schmiede). It was translated into Czech (1924), Polish (1925) and Bulgarian (1929); it was premiered in translation in Prague (7.10.1924), Warsaw (7.3.1925) and Sofia (1929). This represented a new type of



comedy for Kaiser. Although having a Scandinavian setting like *David und Goliath*, *Der mutige Seefahrer* and *Das Los des Ossian Balvesen*, the comedy is different in style.

Basically, *Kolportage* is a parody of "Trivialliteratur". The spectator should not identify with events on stage but should be distanced from them through a layer of irony. The fairy-tale plot, with the wealthy commoner marrying the impoverished aristocrat, with the inheritance, the kidnapping and the super-rich Americans, is a parody of the trashy plots of literary "Kitsch". As in *Nebeneinander*, dramatic irony is also used for distancing purposes. We know all the time that the refined aristocrat Acke is really only a beggar's son.

However, the problem with the play is that the parody, the ironic distancing, does not remain consistent right through to the end. The satire is transcended by a serious level of social criticism, which Kaiser seems to intend seriously rather than ironically, and the drama ends in a good deal of optimism. Acke, the beggar's son, who in the right environment has become the perfect aristocrat, proves that social conditions are far more important than genetic factors. Indeed, Frau Appeblom remarks that, if basic social conditions are improved and hunger and poverty eliminated, a social rebirth, a secular paradise on earth would be possible.<sup>57</sup> The younger generation depart for America, which is presented positively as a new land of practicality and

---

<sup>57</sup>See Kaiser, *Kolportage*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, II, 405.



prosperity without restrictive class barriers, and leave behind the moribund, decadent aristocracy of Europe. What matters is not one's name or class but being a "Mensch".<sup>58</sup> *Kolportage* is, therefore, a mixture of light, harmless comedy and serious social implications. For Schürer, Kaiser's "idealistic Realism found its fullest expression in *Kolportage*".<sup>59</sup> However, he did not find Alice and Acke's transformation "psychologically motivated, for between the acts they simply turn from arrogant aristocrats into concerned human beings."<sup>60</sup>

Ihering (340) considered *Kolportage*, which was premiered at the Lessing-Theater in Berlin (27.3.1924), and the 1923 Berlin premiere of *Nebeneinander* Kaiser's greatest public successes. Together with the success of *Gas I* at the Volksbühne in 1919, Kaiser had now conquered Berlin. Ludwig Sternaux (344) described the premiere of *Kolportage* as the most successful production of the season and felt that Kaiser had established himself completely with this work and *Nebeneinander* as the most talented playwright of the day. The audience were delighted by *Kolportage* and there was extremely lively applause (348).

Jacobsohn (345) thought that the loud laughter was justified for a drama which could be enjoyed on two different levels. First of all, it was able to entertain on a banal level the naive spectators who took the play

-----  
<sup>58</sup>See Kaiser, *Kolportage*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, II, 403.

<sup>59</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 129.

<sup>60</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 129.





literally (i.e. without irony). And secondly, it appealed to the more perceptive and sophisticated theatregoers who noticed the irony and could appreciate its parody of such literary trash. He was amazed by the lightness of Kaiser's touch and that here there was a German dramatist whose irony lasted an entire evening. Although it possessed all the stock ingredients of "Trivialliteratur", this comedy still retained a higher literary value. However, the play, despite its clever subject-matter and the witty parody of the first act, became boring for Hanns Martin Elster (349), because there was a loss of style – the parody was not followed through to the end and all that remained was "Kitsch". Mysing (348) also lost interest in the work after the well-constructed "Vorspiel" and first act, as the figures became too stereotyped. Characters like the young moralistic American, whose function was to criticise the rotten feudal aristocracy of Europe, were now too commonplace. Moreover, considering the scandals and corruption in the United States, this moral supremacy appeared extremely doubtful to Mysing. Sternaux was unhappy with the moralistic aspects and found the final message too serious and ponderous for such a light, humorous comedy. Another Berlin critic (347), who was not absolutely convinced by the message, saw this unsubtly didactic play as a satire on the "Kitsch" of the cinema. For once, Kaiser had abandoned all artistic pretensions and had allowed his characters to speak as individuals. In contrast to the other critics, Ernst Heilborn (346) complained that



the parody was not at all obvious and that the play only presented straight "Kolportage" all the way through. For Ihering (343), Kaiser had a phenomenal sensitivity towards contemporary idioms. Earlier, he had used the language of the "Oh-Mensch!" period for drama after drama; more recently, he had used the phrases of the "Schieberzeit" in *Nebeneinander* and now in *Kolportage* the language of "Trivialliteratur". Kaiser's theatrical talent resided in his ability to construct scenes almost entirely from catchwords and to present the slogans of the day antithetically in his dramas and characters. Ihering concluded that Kaiser could become an effective writer of comedies by satirising the sentimentality and clichés of this genre and that he could become Germany's greatest writer of revues.

Jacobsohn considered Emil Lind's production worthy of Kaiser's original. Lind made no attempt to present the play parodistically, which would have made the evening monotonous. Instead, the production was downplayed, serious and restrained. Ihering described this premiere of *Kolportage* as excellent as long as Ilka Grüning (Erbgräfin) was on the stage. She was praised by most critics for her humorous performance (344, 345). Rudolf Klein-Rogge (Erik) seemed uncertain whether he should present his part as a young American seriously or parodistically (343). This tasteful, delightful production, with its fine acting, deserved completely its public success (344, 347). However,





there were a good number of spectators in the audience who, failing to recognise the parody and taking the "Kitsch" seriously, were disgusted by the laughter of the other theatregoers at the "wrong" moment (349).

On the same day as the Berlin production (27.3.1924), *Kolportage* was also premiered at the Neues Theater in Frankfurt/M. Arthur Hellmer's excellent production was a good success, although the last act was anticlimactic (350, 352). Werner Deubel (351) was pleasantly surprised by *Kolportage* after the recent "Mischprodukt" *Nebeneinander*, if only on traditional grounds. Now Kaiser had created a play without distortions, without too much moralising and without any hysterical saviours like the Spazierer or the Pfandleiher. Deubel welcomed this change, this new concentration on theatricality and technique. Instead of tortured "poetry" and soul-searching, Kaiser had presented a gripping plot, a superb, concise structure and scenes of delicious irony. He thought that the play ended with a social message because it had to finish with a moral to be considered a genuine example of "Kolportage". However, Hellmer took this final message seriously and only presented "ein komödienhaftes Thesenstück mit naturalistischen Herztönen". Consequently, his production neglected many ironic possibilities.

Later the same year (1.10.1924), *Kolportage* was performed for the first time in Neustadt, at the Schauspielhaus, as the last work in the cycle "Deutsche



Komödie unserer Zeit". In opposition to Jacobsohn (345), Friedrich Kummer (353) and Felix Zimmermann (354) agreed with Elster (349) that Kaiser had not maintained a parodistic tone throughout the play. For Kummer, Frau Appeblom's remark that social conditions should be improved was to be taken seriously, not ironically. Zimmermann lost interest as the irony wore off in the course of the action and felt that only the comic, parodistic "Vorspiel" was original, while the rest was too clichéd. He was not completely convinced by the sincerity of Kaiser's parodistic intentions, especially taking into account the serious social themes – the bitter, scornful attack on the aristocracy. According to Kummer, the style of Alfred Stöger's production changed after the satirical "Vorspiel" and the play's serious, realistic aspects began to dominate. He considered *Kolportage* a pleasant evening's entertainment and admired Kaiser's sparkling language as well as his technical and theatrical ability. Zimmermann thought that the production, which did not attempt to present the text consistently as a parody, deteriorated with the original.

Emil Lind revived *Kolportage* in Berlin, this time at the Wallner-Theater, in 1925. As in the premiere, Walter Steinbeck played the Graf, although Adele Sandrock replaced Ilka Grüning as the Erbgräfin. Whereas Lind's premiere had been cautious and subdued, the parody was emphasized in this more adventurous revival. Still, this production of a Kaiser comedy, which had even gone down well with Kaiser's enemies



when it first appeared, was, with its talented cast, placards and light effects, a total success (355).

When *Kolportage* was performed at the Munich Schauspielhaus, the reviewer for the *Völkischer Beobachter* (356) in 1926 wondered where Kaiser had been hiding when the bullets were flying during the First World War. Instead of presenting the German aristocrats who were racially pure and who had sacrificed their lives in thousands during the war, Kaiser had only parodied the degenerate aristocrats – those nobles who had emerged during Wilhelm II's reign and who were contaminated by Jewish money. This elitist reviewer denounced the comedy as a work of delight merely to ignorant, average minds, to philistines and democrats. Kaiser had just distorted stock comic figures into puppet-like, soulless caricatures; there was no trace of humour and feeling, only cold, contrived rationality. Of course, the naive public was enraptured by this production...!

The revival of *Kolportage* at the Komödie in September 1929 was the third Berlin production of the play in five years (363).<sup>61</sup> Kurt Pinthus (358) reported that this was Kaiser's most performed and successful drama and that it had even been filmed. He attributed this success to the fact that it was the author's most amusing work, although not the most important. Not only was the parody on literary trash

---

<sup>61</sup>Rühle dates this production 19.9.1929, p. 512. However, the reviews by Ihering (357), Pinthus (358), Nürnberg (363), Falk (364) and Jacobs (365), all dated 17.9.1929, would imply an earlier date.





very successful but also the comedy had deeper implications. Kaiser was attacking aristocratic prejudices while supporting humanity at large and a more flexible younger generation. Rolf Nürnberg (363) praised Kaiser's technical virtuosity and the happy mixture of satire, theatricality and didacticism in this masterly comedy which had made parody so popular. Even Kaiser's archfoe Alfred Kerr (359) had to concede that this was the author's most entertaining work. Yet he suspected that *Kolportage* had not been intended originally as a parody. In 1929, there were still reviewers (360) who felt that the attempt at parody had failed and that the play itself only offered terrible "Kolportage".

The Berlin critics had many objections to Erich Engel's production, with which he made his debut for the Reinhardt-stages (363). Pinthus thought that *Kolportage* could be produced in three ways: 1) the play could be presented at face value, without parody, as straight "Kitsch" to the delight of a naive audience; 2) it could be presented, like Lind's premiere, with very gentle irony, which thus allowed the audience to discover for themselves the play's humour, or 3) it could be presented, like Engel's production, in an exaggerated, self-conscious, parodistic style. Indeed, Engel's production was extremely imaginative. Ernst Schütte's sets unfolded like a picture-book to depict the various scene-changes (357, 361). Instead of the dialogue with the uncle in the "Vorspiel", Karin retold her life-story as a monologue which was accompanied by kitschy



slides projected onto the wall (357, 365). Also, there was much praise for Walter Goehr's parodistic music, which was played by Sid Kay's Fellows, a jazz band. This music added to the atmosphere and increased the comic effect, e.g. every time the King's dragoons were mentioned, a pompous military march was played (361, 362, 365).

Although some reviewers were satisfied by the acting (362), Falk criticised the uneven stylistic mixture of caricature and realism. Whereas Gülstorff (Baron) offered a marvellous caricature, Hedwig Bleibtreu's Erbgräfin was, in total contrast, completely realistic. He felt that this was bad casting, especially considering Ilka Grüning's comic performance in the same part. Also, Otto Wallburg (Graf) did not really know what to do with his role. At least, Leopoldine Konstantin (Karin) adapted confidently to the changing moods of a work which opened parodistically and concluded realistically. Ihering considered Wallburg ineffective and was not amused by the extremely parodistic acting of Max Gülstorff, who wore a long beard and strutted around the stage (365). As well, the American Erik (Franz Lederer) had a thick Austrian accent (361).

Nevertheless, despite Engel's feats of the imagination, the critics were not satisfied. Pinthus complained that all the production's effects (the photos, the music, the moving sets, etc.) were, in fact, counterproductive. This drama was so effective in its own right that these extraneous satirical gimmicks were not really necessary and actually





weakened its impact. Still, this overdone production was not able to destroy the drama's solid structure and sparkling dialogue. Likewise, Monty Jacobs (365) criticised Engel for underestimating his audience. He felt that Lind's serious, non-parodistic premiere had been better because he had respected the audience's intelligence and had allowed them to deduce the parody themselves. Whereas the humour at the premiere had been more lasting, Engel's effects quickly wore off. Yet *Kolportage*, with its variety, clever ideas and serious insights, withstood Engel's heavy-handedness. Despite the basically false premise of the production, the comedy was still effective, thanks to its indestructible humour, the music, the witty sets and the fine acting. Falk objected that the performance lacked tempo and was too drawn-out. He thought that *Kolportage* would never have been such a great success, if Lind had premiered it in such an exaggerated fashion.

The fact that a leading theatre like the Komödie had opened its season with the revival of a parody exemplified for Kerr the modest aspirations of contemporary producers. Ihering, too, was concerned regarding the wider implications of this production, which had brought together a strange combination – the experienced, successful stars of the Komödie and a demanding director like Engel. However, this production marked a regressive step for Engel, who recently had become less exacting and more accessible as a director. Whereas his earlier production of Grabbe's *Scherz, Satire*,



*Ironie und tiefere Bedeutung* had developed its comedy from the play's language and meaning, this interpretation of *Kolportage* represented a step backwards in that it relied heavily on the folding sets for its parodistic effect. With its mixture of correct and false elements, it was symptomatic for Ihering of the failed opening productions of the season. He felt that this evening did not help contemporary theatre escape from the cul-de-sac in which it was trapped, and that the real threat to the theatre was not talking pictures because, up to now, they had failed to win an audience in Berlin. What he disliked was the lack of courage of those who were trying to stabilise the situation in the theatre, not at the stage to which progress had advanced but at a more regressive level. This production was no breakthrough since previously experimental directors like Engel were now escaping into the conventional. Still, Kaiser's well-known play, which had been performed all over, was once again a total success (357, 362). Falk thought that the applause would be greater if Engel reworked the production, changing some of the cast and unifying its style.

The basic problem of *Kolportage* for Kaiser's contemporaries was deciding exactly where the irony began and where it ended. Some critics felt that the irony was consistent to the end of the performance (345) and that the moralistic conclusion was a necessary ingredient for a successful parody of "Kolportage" (351). Others thought that



the parody wore off as the serious themes took over (349, 353, 354). There were even those who described the play as pure "Kitsch" without any parody at all (346, 360). Productions, too, varied from Lind's downplayed premiere to Engel's extravagant parody of 1929. Still, despite all the confusion, *Kolportage* was frequently produced and must be considered a great success. The wide range of reactions can be attributed to the text's double-edged quality, its ambivalence between literary parody and serious social criticism. One story, which circulated at the time, summarises nicely this ambivalence:

Ein Theaterdirektor hatte, so lesen wir in der neuen bei Kiepenheuer erscheinenden Theaterzeitschrift *Die Premiere*, in der Provinz Georg Kaisers *Kolportage* inszeniert, wobei ihm der kleine Irrtum unterlaufen war, das Stück als tragisch-würdige Angelegenheit auf die Bretter zu bringen. Er kommt nach Berlin, findet dort die etwas massgeblichere Fassung vor und telegraphiert an seine Wirkungsstätte: '*Kolportage* ab morgen ironisch spielen.'<sup>2</sup>

## Gats

*Gats*, a "Schauspiel in drei Akten", was first written in 1924 and a revised version was published in 1925 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). Stylistically and thematically, it contains many Expressionist features – the abstract, futuristic, symmetrical setting of Act I; the use of light

---

<sup>2</sup>anon., n.d., n.s., GKC.





and colour symbolism; the representative types; the mass scene of Act II; the "Telegrammstil"; the themes of "Siedlertum" and of the "Neuer Mensch". The play's starting point is the "Siedlertum" which was advocated in *Gas I* and with which we were left at the end of *Hölle Weg Erde*. The "Weltsiedlungsunion", led by the Kapitän, is trying to find new land to colonise where the world's surplus unemployed individuals can settle. Once more, Kaiser is concerned with strikingly topical social themes: the unemployment, poverty and hunger caused by overpopulation; the problem of birth control. On discovering the birth control powder "Gats", which causes sterilisation, the "Neuer Mensch", the Kapitän, now rejects the idea of "Siedlertum" because it merely represents a return to a primitive level of existence and does not solve the basic problem of overpopulation. However, not surprisingly, his elitist proposal to sterilise the lowly and the poor to save the rich is not accepted by the masses.

Although the title indicates how closely *Gats* is related to the Expressionist dramas *Gas I* and *II*, Kaiser renounces in this work former Expressionist beliefs. As in *Nebeneinander*, the play's form highlights his distancing from Expressionism. The Expressionist settings of Acts I and II give way to the wretched Naturalistic setting of Act III where the Kapitän, rejected by the masses, lives in isolation with the Sekretärin who, out of love, is the only person still loyal to him. This development in the settings



emphasizes the return to sordid daily reality from the lofty heights of Expressionism and symbolises the death of idealism. Furthermore, Kaiser criticises the Expressionist, "Neuer Mensch" explicitly here. The Kapitän is described as a "Feind der Menschheit", who really hates mankind because his ideals are unattainable; utopianism and idealism are questioned since they only lead to bloodshed; the Kapitän realises that idealists like himself, who just cause trouble, should be destroyed.<sup>63</sup> The "Neuer Mensch" is depicted as an unsympathetic fanatic, as a total failure. Even the Sekretärin turns against him. Staying true to his ideals, the Kapitän makes her drink the "Gats" powder without her knowledge. However, the Sekretärin's female instincts – her desire to be a mother and to restore the Kapitän's faith in humanity through a son – are stronger than her belief in his ideals. She is repulsed by what he has done and betrays the Kapitän, who is murdered by an angry mob. Whereas the daughter in *Gas I* had offered some hope for the future with her promise to give birth to the "Neuer Mensch", now sterilisation has made a future "Neuer Mensch" impossible.

*Gats* is one of Kaiser's weakest plays, the plot is extremely contrived (the "Gats" powder; the "Weltsiedlungsunion") and the character motivation unconvincing (e.g. the Sekretärin's abrupt transformation).

---

<sup>63</sup>See Kaiser, *Gats*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, II, 422, 415, 441 and 454.





For Kenworthy, this was an "Erneuerungs-drama";<sup>64</sup> for Steffens, it had nothing to do with Expressionism.<sup>65</sup>

Whereas *Kolportage* had been Kaiser's only premiere in 1924, 1925 witnessed the premieres of *Gats* and *Der mutige Seefahrer* as well as the premieres of *Juana* as an opera and of *Margarine*, the revised version of *Der Zentaur*. *Gats* opened at the Deutsches Volkstheater in Vienna on 9.4.1925 where the response of the local critics was cool.<sup>66</sup> They saw it in the context of Kaiser's Expressionist works – for Arnold (366), it was closely related to *Die Koralle*, *Gas I* and *II* and to *Hölle Weg Erde*; Lehner (367) felt that the six Kontroller were descended from the Ingenieur of *Gas I* and that the Kapitän was related to the Milliardärsohn. Despite the many crude and unusual theatrical effects, Max von Millenkovich-Morold (369) was neither satisfied intellectually nor warmed by this cold, rational work which mixed stylised sets and language with ordinary realism. In addition, he disliked its ugly title. Lehner complained that Kaiser was too hurried and that his dramas were staged too soon before his ideas had had time to mature. He was not convinced by the development from *Die Koralle* to *Gats*. Here, the language, characters and structure were skeletal and the action was predictable. The final act, with its combination

-----  
<sup>64</sup>Kenworthy, p. 72.

<sup>65</sup>Steffens, p. 99.

<sup>66</sup>Robert F. Arnold (366) thought that this was the first Uraufführung of a Kaiser play in Vienna. However, the premiere of *Der Fall des Schülers Vehgesack* was presented at the Neue Bühne there on 11.2.1915.



of a shabby Naturalist setting and ecstatic Expressionist language ("Expressionismus im Schlafrock"), represented for him a complete loss of style. Arnold described *Gats* as a typical Kaiser play with its clear structure, wide panorama, anonymous types, social formulae and feverish dialectics. However, he could not really cope with this "peculiar" play and was not sure whether Kaiser intended the Kapitän's social remedy to be taken ironically or not.

The production was at the most an "Achtungserfolg" on account of the acting (369). According to Lehner, the performance and the text, which both did not break any new ground, were equally ineffective. Another reviewer (368) reported that *Gats* was not as well received as Kaiser's plays usually were since the ideas of birth control and sterilisation threatened to overturn the entire social order and to destroy one of mankind's "nicest" feelings, the feeling of motherhood. Moreover, the Expressionist language, which was so abbreviated that it was almost incomprehensible, caused great problems for the actors and public.

As in Vienna, *Gats* was interpreted in the light of Kaiser's Expressionist plays when it was produced in Hamburg at the Thalia-Theater.<sup>67</sup> Hoffmann (370) thought that it was linked to *Die Koralie* and *Gas I* and *II*. Erich Kühn (371) saw no difference between the Millionär of the earlier works and

---

<sup>67</sup>None of the reviews give a date for this production. Hermann Röbbeling (1875-1949) who staged the production was the "Direktor" of the Hamburg Thalia-Theater from 1914-32 and of the Vienna Burgtheater from 1932-38.





the Kapitän in this social-political drama, identifying both as Georg Kaiser himself. The Hamburg critics were more favourable towards *Gats* than the critics in Vienna. For Hoffmann, it was, with its frantic tempo and concentrated style, a compelling, enthralling drama. Although it was not convincing, although the logic and the action were flawed, although the ending signified intellectual capitulation, Kühn found *Gats* powerful and stimulating (371). Hermann Röbbeling's impressive production, which aimed for powerful effects and a dynamic presentation of the dialogue, was well received by the local critics (371, 372, 373). The second act seemed the most effective; the third act, however, was a major anticlimax because of the stylistic contradiction in the original between this and the previous acts (373). Although silent after the first two acts, the audience greeted the conclusion of this clear production with very lively applause (370).

### *Der mutige Seefahrer*

Although first written in 1910, *Der mutige Seefahrer*, a "Komödie in vier Akten", was only published, in a revised version, in 1926 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). Still, this is a typical early Kaiser comedy. Its conventional form is basically realistic, if a little contrived at times with regard to the characterisation (Jefferson's and Lars's transformations) and the plot motivation (Jefferson's





letter, illness and sudden recovery, etc.). Set in a small provincial Danish town, this is another of Kaiser's Scandinavian comedies. As in *David und Goliath*, we have the theme of the sudden acquisition of wealth and the contrast between the petty-bourgeoisie (the Krys family) and the very wealthy. Joe Jefferson anticipates the tremendously rich American figures of later works like *Kolportage* (Erik) and *Zwei Krawatten* (Mabel). Like Möller, the petty-bourgeois Lars, after overcoming his initial cowardice, succeeds in vanquishing his opponent, the colossal, super-rich "Goliath".<sup>68</sup> The Axel/Dagmar subplot of *David und Goliath* is paralleled here by the love between Madsen and Karen. As in *Juana*, a shipwreck is crucial for the plot motivation. The subject-matter also has a superficial topicality in that references are made to the trend towards monopoly capitalism (small shops like Lars's are being forced out of business by larger chainstores based in Copenhagen), although this theme is not really developed. On the whole, *Der mutige Seefahrer* is not nearly as successful as *David und Goliath*. Kenworthy describes both plays as "only slight comedies".<sup>69</sup>

When it was premiered at the Staatliches Schauspielhaus in Dresden (12.11.1925), *Der mutige Seefahrer* was a great public success (377, 380), although the critical response was mixed. Johannes Reichelt (374), Felix Zimmermann (378) and Friedrich Kummer (380) praised the play, if mainly for

-----  
<sup>68</sup>See Kaiser, *Der mutige Seefahrer*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, V, 619-20.

<sup>69</sup>Kenworthy, p. 106.



traditional reasons. For Reichelt, this remarkably mature early comedy was, with its delightful mixture of compassion and humour, one of Kaiser's best plays. Here Kaiser seemed concerned about the lives of ordinary people, the view of humanity was purer than in the later dramas and, in the first two acts, Kaiser had even presented his characters with great inner involvement. Zimmermann saw *Der mutige Seefahrer* as a transition work between Naturalism and Expressionism. In contrast to the later cold-hearted "Denkspieler", the early Kaiser was a writer capable of warm human feelings, whose characters were rounded and sharply drawn. Zimmermann extolled the brilliant first act, the deep tragic undertones, the true humanity of Lars's development and the touching reunion scene between Lars and his wife. With its fine observation of life, the concise, witty dialogue and the unusual, almost fantastic features of the action, this was an effective drama.

Kummer, who liked this comedy precisely because it was accessible, considered it an example of the contemporary trend towards "Neue Sachlichkeit". He welcomed the return to nature and objectivity after the ugly, tortured excesses of Expressionism. This play was pleasing since it contained no elusive symbolism, no frantic "Telegrammstil", no "Vorbeireden" of the characters, no hysterical stiltedness, no pathological hatred, no mocking irony and no repressed eroticism. Above all, it was not a product of the intellect. Instead, he called it Kaiser's most heartwarming work,





conceived out of compassion and a joy in mankind. It was cheerful and charming in its human aspects. In another review (379), he described the comedy as a simple, clear provincial idyll, pleasantly combining humour and sentimentality.<sup>70</sup> However, Kummer had to concede that, after the comic first act and the tragicomic second act, the ending was less convincing – Jefferson's proposal to Lars's "widow" and Lars's ultimate victory. Also, the figure of Madsen, the shop-assistant and composer, was not entirely successful. Reichelt, too, acknowledged that, in the last two acts, the plot became implausible.

Julius Ferdinand Wollf (375)<sup>71</sup> enjoyed the lively, delightful first act and the powerful reunion scene but was less satisfied by the Madsen/Karen relationship. Moreover, he was very disappointed by the exaggerated figure of Joe Jefferson in his checked coat and the subsequent degeneration of *Der mutige Seefahrer* from a spirited, sentimental comedy to a loud farce. He found Jefferson a totally stupid and impossible figure. As well, the manner in which Kaiser destroyed the touching atmosphere of the homecoming scene demonstrated his tastelessness and contempt for mankind. Wollf felt that this attack on the bourgeoisie was unprepared and ineffective. Also, Lars's attack on

-----  
<sup>70</sup>As the wording and content of this review (379) is very similar to review no. 380, F. K. is presumably Friedrich Kummer.

<sup>71</sup>Julius Ferdinand Wollf (b. 1871), who worked for the *Dresdener Neueste Nachrichten*, refused to emigrate during the Nazi period and committed suicide with his wife in the early 1940's. See Rühle, p. 1177.



Jefferson was unconvincing. Still, he could understand the play's contradiction in style, if it was true that this early work had been revised only recently. Another reviewer (376) was dissatisfied by the forced ending because Lars's transformation was too sudden and implausible. This total reversal of character was a catastrophe for a work which otherwise was mature, enthralling and well structured. Kaiser did not allow his character to develop naturally but instead treated Lars just like a puppet, without considering whether this abrupt transformation was convincing or not. Although the comedy was amusing, it did not fulfill its promise and, as it proceeded, destroyed any empathy generated by the opening acts.

Kummer was proud of this fine, detailed Dresden production which ensured the play's success. According to Zimmermann, the director Josef Gielen raised the play above a mere Naturalist description of milieu to the realm of higher comedy. His excellent, witty, sprightly production emphasized the comic features of the original over its tragic elements (377, 378). However, Wollf, who could not understand why Gielen had not tried to tone down the crude, tasteless figure of Joe Jefferson, found Lothar Mehnert's performance in this part barely tolerable. He felt that, for the production to be entirely successful, it had to overcome the stylistic contradiction of the original and maintain a consistent style – either as a farce from beginning to end or not at all. The acting was also of a high standard and





the reunion scene was especially effective (375, 378).

After the very successful Dresden premiere, *Der mutige Seefahrer* was performed for the first time in Vienna at the Deutsches Volkstheater where it was also a good success (383). Again, Lars's transformation from his earlier cowardice was not entirely convincing (382). Polgar (381) described this as a grotesque play, externally a "Volksstück" and internally a parody. Although an early work, it contained certain features typical of Kaiser like the bizarre twists to the action and the characters who were abruptly jolted out of their everyday existence. The author's dislike for his home town was revealed by the fact that the ship, which exploded and sank, was named, with a degree of wish-fulfillment, the "Magdeburg". Another local reviewer (382) was disappointed by this comedy. Kaiser had now compressed the many different styles of his other dramas into a single work. In each act, a different play began with a different theme typical of the author. *Der mutige Seefahrer* lacked humour, it was not aggressive enough and its attack on philistinism was itself "spiessbürgerlich". This reviewer criticised Dr. Rudolf Beer's production because it intensified the sentimental elements of the original instead of parodying them. Polgar, too, complained that the production, although rounded, overemphasized the atmospheric and emotional effects and that this attempt at warmth undermined the comedy's humour. He agreed with Beer's decision to drop completely the figures of Madsen and Karen,





two insignificant, boring parts, at the end of the performance. Still, the acting, with Bassermann as Lars and Else Bassermann as Johanne, was splendid (383).

In 1926, *Der mutige Seefahrer* was performed for the first time in Munich, at the Kammerspiele. The critic for the *Völkischer Beobachter* (385) dismissed the play as an unrealistic mixture of comedy, kitschy sentimentality and implausibility. In addition, the constant references to death were unpleasant; the Lars plot was improbable; the sentimental scenes were neither moving nor convincing and the characters (the rich American, the petty-bourgeois types) were too clichéd. He felt that Kaiser lacked warm humour and that he was not a genuine talent. The reviewer for the *Allgemeine Rundschau* (384) also found the plot improbable but thought that the play at least offered some scope for the actors. Hans Schweikart's production tried to refine the crude features of the original. Despite his hostility towards Kaiser's text, the critic for the *Völkischer Beobachter* acknowledged the lively applause and laughter with which the public greeted the comedy. Still, he attributed this success to the fine acting and Schweikart's achievements as director. However, he concluded that, without such a marvellous production, *Der mutige Seefahrer* would have failed in its own right. Katsch was impressive as Lars, the role in which Bassermann had recently been extremely successful in Vienna (384).



Later the same year (31.5.1926), Kaiser's comedy opened at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus, where it was performed eight times. Once more, it was a public success and received lively applause (388, 389). Again, the critics were divided. On the one hand, *Der mutige Seefahrer* was pleasing because it was not at all problematic but simply "eine menschliche Komödie" (389); it was a traditional comedy, skillfully structured, entertaining and very dramatic (388); warm humour radiated from its presentation of the lives of ordinary people (391). On the other hand, it was rejected as a waste of time and as an implausible, insignificant, mediocre comedy. Instead of an organic development of the action, Kaiser only offered a *deus ex machina* (390); the ending was forced (387) and the characters were contrived (386). This was another production which tried to present the Krys family sympathetically rather than as a parody of the petty-bourgeoisie. Karl Knaack's non-experimental, realistic production managed to fill the artificial characters with life (386, 389). Also, Eduard Sturm's cosy, petty-bourgeois set was full of realistic detail and human warmth (391). This was a masterly production and the acting was of a very high standard (387, 388). In particular, there was enthusiastic applause for Hermann Greid, Friedrich Rosenthal and Karl Knaack as the three brothers Krys (391).

In 1927, Josef Gielen, who had directed the Dresden premiere of *Der mutige Seefahrer*, revived the comedy at the Thalia-theater in Berlin, with Erich Ponto again playing





Jens.<sup>72</sup> Ihering (392) described the drama as a stylistic hotchpotch, as a mixture of "bürgerliches Lustspiel" and commedia dell'arte, of the sentimental and the grotesque, of "Telegrammstil" and verbosity. It touched upon a wide range of themes from other works like *Kolportage*, *Kanzlist Krehler*, *David und Goliath* and *Zweimal Oliver*. He felt that Kaiser had been unlucky because his dramas of redemption like *Hölle Weg Erde* had been widely discussed, while his farces had been neglected as minor works. Really, Kaiser's lively, light, unpretentious comedies were his most genuine stage-plays. Although this was a traditional farce containing many stock ingredients, Ihering detected an early sensitivity towards contemporary issues (the small shops being taken over by the large chains) and only criticised the love-scenes and Lars's triumph over Jefferson. Whereas the provincial theatres had rushed to perform *Der mutige Seefahrer* when it first appeared, Berlin had been hesitant. Ihering was pleased that this comedy had not opened in Berlin before the smug audience of a major theatre. Instead, a theatre like the Thalia-theater had prepared the way for other Berlin productions of Kaiser's comedy with this brisk, highly successful production.

-----  
<sup>72</sup>According to Rühle, this was Erich Ponto's first major success in Berlin, p. 881.



## *Zweimal Oliver*

*Zweimal Oliver*, "Stück in drei Teilen", was first written in 1925–26 and a revised version was published in 1926 (Berlin: Die Schmiede). It was translated into English in 1927 and was premiered in London in 1932. This is an extremely complex play both thematically and stylistically. It is a hybrid mixture of Expressionism, revue and psychological drama. Basically, we have a more detailed reworking of the theme from *Der Protagonist* – the schizophrenic performer torn between his roles and reality, between "Schein" and "Sein". Oliver is a quick-change artist who gradually rejects unpleasant external reality more and more until he escapes completely into his dreamworld, into the paradise of "madness". He eliminates the real Oliver, becoming instead with great happiness one of his roles – the Tsar of Russia. His "suicide" symbolises the destruction of the dualism between external reality and illusion in favour of inner reality.

Kenworthy did not feel that *Zweimal Oliver* could be called "a typically Expressionist play";<sup>73</sup> Schürer thought that the Expressionist characteristics of "this private tragedy" were "limited to the language".<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, there are many points of contact with the Expressionist dramas. The open form within a tripartite structure really presents the scenes of a "Stationendrama",<sup>75</sup> concerned with

-----  
<sup>73</sup>Kenworthy, p. 159.

<sup>74</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 123.

<sup>75</sup>See Kenworthy, p. 159.



Oliver's psychological development. The large number of doctors in white coats is similar to the Expressionist use of multiple representative types; "Telegrammstil" is used; the murder of a double and the triumph of illusion can already be found in *Die Koralie*; the suicide, the open form and the uselessness of money are all reminiscent of *Von morgens bis mitternachts*.<sup>76</sup> In addition to the psychological and Expressionist aspects, there is a more popularistic level. Indeed, Kaiser displays a certain commercialism in his use of variety scenes (the semi-naked dancing girls, the balancing act, Oliver's performance and the use of music). He seems to be pandering here to popular tastes and the desire for titillating escapism. The play's main weakness is the subplot with Oliver's wife – her insane jealousy and the abrupt manner in which she is dropped from the action after she has contributed her part to the plot motivation.<sup>77</sup>

After the successes of *Nebeneinander* and *Kolportage*, interest in Kaiser was so great that *Zweimal Oliver* could be staged as Kaiser's "erste 'Massen-Uraufführung'",<sup>78</sup> in a joint premiere by nine provincial theatres on 15.4.1926.<sup>79</sup>

-----  
<sup>76</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 123.

<sup>77</sup>However, in the light of Oliver's speech to Olivia (Kaiser, *Zweimal Oliver*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, II, 488), it could be argued that her disappearance is motivated because, for Oliver, she belongs to the world of unpleasant external reality. With his affirmation of illusion, he is rejecting all aspects of this horrible real world, including his wife.

<sup>78</sup>Rühle, p. 703.

<sup>79</sup>*Zweimal Oliver* was premiered simultaneously in Barmen-Elberfeld, Bochum-Duisburg, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Karlsruhe, Krefeld, Mannheim and Oldenburg. Schürer says incorrectly that it was premiered in eight theatres (*Kaiser*, p. 16) but corrects this mistake on p. 124.





The Dresden premiere at the Staatliches Schauspielhaus was well applauded and considered a success. The fact that a woman in the audience became hysterical and had to be carried out after Oliver's murder of his double testified to the unsettling quality of Kaiser's original (393).

Ihering (393, 394)<sup>80</sup> had mixed feelings about the text, describing it as a marvellous piece of theatre but finding the ending evasive. He thought that this was really two plays in one (a bourgeois, domestic tragedy which developed into Oliver's private tragedy) and that Kaiser had over-emphasized the figure of Oliver's wife with her violent, pathological possessiveness. He was, therefore, surprised when she suddenly disappeared from the play, although this was at least better than the banal ending, brought about by the wife, which he had expected. By now, Ihering had had enough of the "Sein"/"Schein" theme. At this time, other themes were needed instead of such extreme individualism, especially considering Pirandello's tiresome treatment of these themes. In particular, the scenes in the lunatic asylum proved ineffective, because this type of scene had been presented so often on stage that it had become clichéd. Hans v. Zwehl (397) complained that, after the powerful symbolism and broad panorama of the first part, the play degenerated to a sensational private tragedy. For Johannes Reichelt (395), the psychopathic jealousy of Oliver's wife undermined the psychological plausibility of

-----  
<sup>80</sup>H. Ih. (393) is presumably Herbert Ihering.



the action and Oliver's tragedy was not absolutely convincing. Although this was a gripping, logical work, it did not achieve any deep effects and only amounted to "Scheindramatik". Will Vesper (396), who was the least favourable of the critics in Dresden, wrote that this "plumpe Banalität", this wretched work was a waste of the audience's money and patience and that it left a bitter taste.

Ihering felt that *Zweimal Oliver* could be made very effective on the stage, if the play's inappropriate sentimental, human aspects were downplayed and if the dated "Schein/Sein" theme was relegated to the background. Instead, it should be presented as a "Sprechrevue" and the virtuoso artistic effects should be accentuated. The two scenes in the asylum would also have to be compressed into one, with the other lunatics being omitted but with Oliver's monologue remaining. However, Georg Kiesau's production in Dresden, which artistically was not an avantgarde town, was traditional. This was an ensemble production with good casting and cameo roles. It was controlled, conventional, tasteful and respectable; there was no attempt to bring out the sensational effects and the dancing lacked temperament. As well, Friedrich Lindner's Oliver was restrained, believable and carefully nurtured. Unfortunately, this style of performance was too old-fashioned and did not point to the future. In contrast, Julius Ferdinand Wollf was pleased that Georg Kiesau had avoided the danger of sacrificing the





play's ideas for extravagant effects.<sup>81</sup> For Vesper, the good production could not overcome the drama's unpleasant aftertaste.

Elsewhere in the provinces, Viktor Ahlers' well attended production of *Zweimal Oliver* in Bochum-Duisburg received lively applause. He enlivened the play through cuts in the text and omitted the final scene in the garden of the lunatic asylum. Also, jazz music and the latest hit songs added to the atmosphere (399, 400). Likewise, in Krefeld, Ernst Martin cut this last scene in order to intensify the effect of the ending (401, 402). Here, Fritz Junker's excellent Oliver carried the play, which was a great success (401, 403). There was applause, too, for Otto Henning's production in Barmen-Elberfeld (404). In contrast to the Dresden production, Röbbeling's premiere at the Hamburg Thalia-Theater concentrated on external effects (Oliver's quick-change artistry, the jazz music, the variety scenes), although at the expense of the play's intellectual and human aspects (405).

Gustav Lindemann's premiere of *Zweimal Oliver* at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus ran for eight performances. However, the local critics had many misgivings concerning

-----  
<sup>81</sup>"Es besteht die Gefahr, dass das dramatische Erlebnis gefälscht werde, wenn die Idee bei der Aufführung dieses Werkes seinem äusseren Reichtum geopfert, Farbigkeit und Bewegungsgewalt in Buntheit, Lärm und Feuerwerksgeprassel umgewaltsamt werden. Die Aufführung im Dresdner Schauspielhaus ist nirgends abgeirrt, Georg Kiesau, der Spielleiter, an keiner Stelle solcher nahen Versuchung erlegen" (Julius Ferdinand Wollf, *Dresdener Neueste Nachrichten*, n.d., GKC).



Kaiser's original. Hans Brandt (406) felt that this was a weak variation of themes which Kaiser had already treated earlier in dramas like *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, *Die Koralie*, *Nebeneinander* and *Der Protagonist*. In particular, he found the final scenes in the lunatic asylum inconsistent with the rest of the text. They represented an unnecessary epilogue, they were too loosely linked to the main action and were kitschy, sentimental and unconvincing. Kaiser seemed to be escaping into cabaret and the revue in order to meet the needs of the time. For the critic of the *Kölnische Zeitung* (411), Oliver's fate in itself would have been insignificant, if Kaiser had not built around it an effective panorama of the contemporary period (the variety scenes, Olivia's salon, etc.); yet, for another critic (413), the action was unimportant because Kaiser was merely pandering to popular tastes which now took delight in operettas and revues.

The reviewer from the *Düsseldorf Volkszeitung* (407) felt that the bankruptcy of contemporary intellectuals was all the more obvious with this play. Oliver made no attempt to come to terms with life and it was much too easy to escape into the realm of illusion. Although *Zweimal Oliver* was skillfully constructed and was entertaining, it did not leave any deep impressions and was unsatisfactory. Whereas he thought that the cosmic works of Barlach and Werfel could lead to spiritual regeneration, the critic for the *Kasseler Neueste Nachrichten* (410) rejected a writer like Kaiser,





whose new drama only offered a mixture of Americanism, the cinema and shock effects. Such a contrived play with its stock ingredients (the shooting, the seduction, the dancing, the scenes backstage) left this critic feeling extremely empty. There were complaints that the murder of Olivia's friend was improbable (413), that the restaurant scene with Oliver's daughter and the Direktor was illogical (409), that Oliver's sudden falling in love with Olivia was unconvincing (408), that, apart from Oliver, the other characters were merely one-dimensional types (410), that the ballet scene distracted from Oliver's fate (414) and that the final scene had nothing to do with the play (413). Indeed, the reviewer for the *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt* (408) thought that, instead of this anticlimactic ending, it would be more effective if the play concluded with the murder of Oliver's double. For Dr. Hendel (409), German drama had not been saved by *Zweimal Oliver*, which had adapted unscrupulously film techniques to the stage and was nothing more than genuine "Kolportage".

Still, despite the negative comments regarding Kaiser's text, Lindemann's production was greeted with lively applause by the capacity audience and was considered a complete success (408, 411, 412). It was an exemplary production which avoided sensational effects and concentrated on Kaiser's language (411, 413). Lindemann presented the scenes concisely, emphasizing only what was essential (406). As well, Eduard Sturm's simple, impressive sets eliminated all unnecessary elements and crude lighting





effects were also avoided (406, 412, 413). The production held a middle course between fantasy and reality; its tempo was aided by the use of a "Drehbühne" (411, 412). Of the actors, Fritz Reiff's outstanding performance as Oliver was well applauded (408, 412). The audience also enjoyed the variety scenes, although the critic for the *Kölnische Zeitung* was disappointed by the fact that one of the most educated audiences in Germany had applauded the ballet scenes right in the middle of the performance.

Later the same year on 5.9.1926, *Zweimal Oliver* was performed in Berlin at the Theater in der Königgrätzer Strasse. According to Polgar (419), the Berlin theatres had now become less adventurous on account of financial problems and few new works were appearing there. Emil Faktor (415, 416)<sup>82</sup> described *Zweimal Oliver* as one of Kaiser's weaker plays, as below par with regard to its content and technique, especially after such an accomplished drama as *Kolportage*. He thought that his opposition to Pirandello would have been meaningless, if he were now to enthuse about this similar work. The theme of the uselessness of money and the "chambre séparée" scene had been presented more effectively in *Von morgens bis mitternachts*. Also, the complete disappearance of Oliver's wife after the opening scenes was a weakness in the text. Faktor felt that this play represented a regression for Kaiser in that he was using techniques which he had already left behind. Although,

---

<sup>82</sup>As the wording and content of review 415 are similar to review 416, E. F. is probably Emil Faktor.



for v. Eschwege (417), Kaiser's drama was contrived and the character motivation unconvincing, he conceded that the production contained some moments of dramatic effectiveness. Another Berlin critic (418) was annoyed by the impossible demands which Kaiser made of his audience. Yet he was impressed by the taut structure and the momentum of the dialogue.

The friendly applause of the audience was seen as arising from their respect for Kaiser, from their goodwill towards the popular Alexander Moissi, who played Oliver, and from the pleasure generated by César Klein's sets and the variety scenes (415, 416). Viktor Barnowsky's conscientious production merged the two scenes in the lunatic asylum, cutting unnecessary detail (416, 417). In general, the acting was controlled and non-hysterical; Moissi appeared childlike, helpless and, during moments of desperation, whimpering (417). For Faktor (416), Moissi was not exactly suited to Kaiser. Whereas Kaiser needed a fast tempo, Moissi took his time. In addition, he lacked variety in his acting.

When *Zweimal Oliver* reached the Munich Residenz-Theater two years later, the reviewer for the *Völkischer Beobachter* (420) felt sorry for Gustav Waldau, who made great efforts to present a character study of the schizophrenic Oliver, and for the actors who had expended their talents on such a confused work with its mixture of many different styles.





## *Papiermühle*

*Papiermühle*, a "Lustspiel in drei Akten", was first written in 1926 and a revised version was published in 1927 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). This is a conventional, melodramatic comedy which even has a happy ending with the lovers, Francine and Ollier, being brought together. It has a small cast, a French provincial setting and conforms to the three unities. *Papiermühle* is usually interpreted as Kaiser's attempt to revenge himself on his critics in general and on Alfred Kerr in particular.<sup>83</sup> The critic Raymond Duchut is a self-seeking opportunist, a parasite who wants to establish himself at the expense of the successful writer, Ernest Ollier. This totally black, unsympathetic character arrogantly regards critics as God's representatives on earth and as far superior to writers. The action revolves around the fact that Ollier who, like Kaiser, has a reputation as a cold, contrived, rational writer has recently written a book of great passion. Duchut wants to prove that this book was based on actual experience – only to discover that Ollier has indeed had a genuine love affair, but with his own wife! In addition to the main plot, there is also some satire on provincial philistinism. However, *Papiermühle* can only be regarded as a weak, minor work. The one-dimensional characters have little depth and the drawn-out plot lacks substance. Apart from the new theme (the attack on the

---

<sup>83</sup>See Huder, "Nachwort" to G. Kaiser, *Werke*, III (Berlin: Propyläen, 1970), 878, Kenworthy, pp. 167–69, Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 131 and Linke, p. 112.



critics), Kaiser offers no startling innovations and stylistically the comedy breaks no new ground. Kenworthy described it as "a slight work";<sup>84</sup> Schürer, who considered it "extremely lightweight", wrote that *Papiermühle* "only indicated that he [Kaiser] was giving up his Expressionist position and trying to fall back on traditional forms."<sup>85</sup>

*Papiermühle*, which was premiered on 26.1.1927 at the Dresden Alberttheater, the Leipzig Schauspielhaus, the Aachen Stadttheater and in Krefeld, was Kaiser's only premiere in 1927.<sup>86</sup> The Aachen production opened the series "Komödien von heute".<sup>87</sup> The Dresden critics reacted rather coolly towards Kaiser's text. Otto Distler (425) described it as a weak "Unterhaltungsstück" which was suited to the demands of a mediocre public and to the average capabilities of the German theatres. He found it neither particularly witty nor stimulating. Fortunately, at least Ollier and Francine were sympathetic, plausible characters who made the comedy possible despite the other less effective figures. Hans Kaergel (423) thought that the play, which did not contain any features typical of Kaiser, could just as easily have been thrown together by lesser writers of comedy. Although the lack of topical problems seemed to indicate to

-----  
<sup>84</sup>Kenworthy, p. 167.

<sup>85</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 131.

<sup>86</sup>Huder (*Kaiser, Werke*, VI, 880), Kenworthy (p. 203) and Rühle (p. 868) only refer to the Dresden premiere. Huder and Rühle report that *Papiermühle* was presented at the Schauspielhaus there; Kenworthy dates the premiere on 26.1.1926 instead of 26.1.1927.

<sup>87</sup>See Dr. Oskar Jancke, "Blätter des Aachener Stadttheaters," 1926-27, GKC.





Johannes Reichelt (421) that this was an early work, the fine dialogue between Ollier and Duchut pointed to the more mature Kaiser. However, he missed the frantic tempo and sparkling ideas of the early comedies in this work which was devoid of humour. Instead, Kaiser only offered sentimentality, cheap emotional excesses, "vermanschte Possenkultur". For Distler, the ending was wretched; Alfred Polgar (424) also found it very weak. Polgar saw this as an amusing comedy which was less ambitious than Kaiser's usual plays. However, the four provincial philistines became monotonous and tiresome because they were presented in too similar a manner (their letters, the duel scene). He was not sure which (if any) of Kaiser's critics was being attacked here.<sup>88</sup> The grotesque quartet of philistines ensured that "das harmlose Lustspielchen" was a public success (422). Paul Smolny's production used slides to display the work's title and a plan of the Paris-Papiermühle-Boulogne railway line (425). Kaergel complained that this production lacked tempo and presented Kaiser's comedy just like any other. According to Polgar, the Dresden actors took only modest advantage of the opportunity to fill out Kaiser's original.

The premiere of *Papiermühle* in Krefeld was a good success because of the fine production.<sup>89</sup> *Papiermühle*, a humorous work, was seen as an act of self-defence by Kaiser.

-----  
<sup>88</sup>In a later review of *Papiermühle* at the Deutsches Volkstheater in Vienna, Polgar described it as a thin, weak comedy with little humour – *Die Weltbühne*, 23 (1927), No. 40, 531–32.

<sup>89</sup>Although the review (426) of this performance is undated, it refers to the production as an Uraufführung.





Technically accomplished and rational, it was a drama typical of its author. Kaiser was at his best in the final scene and in the scenes between Ollier and the four philistines and between Ollier and Duchut (426).

The critics at the Leipzig premiere in the Schauspielhaus were not particularly impressed by Kaiser's comedy. Referring to *Papiermühle* as a "winzigen Gehässigkeit", one local reviewer (428) condemned the play as banal and formless. There were no witty insights and no surprising subtleties; the dialogue lacked sparkle and the subject-matter was wretched. The critic for the *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung* (429) did not think that *Papiermühle* would run as long as Kaiser's previous play *Kolportage*, a work which had already anticipated his complete bankruptcy. The positive feature of this comedy, which only appealed to a limited audience and not to the public at large, was that it revealed through the repulsive figure of the critic Duchut the corruption prevailing within bourgeois literature. In addition, Kaiser had successfully portrayed the sheer wretchedness of the petty-bourgeoisie. Fritz Mack (427) was disappointed because, although the play was amusing, it had failed to fulfill its potential and because a certain shoddiness was apparent in Kaiser's execution of a basically clever idea. He felt that the minor characters had been treated carelessly, that the main female figure was pale and schematic and that the comedy of the last scenes, which degenerated to the level of farce and caricature, was cheap.



There was too much a mixture of the crude and the subtle, of character comedy and situational farce.

Now Kaiser seemed less sensitive towards contemporary problems, his themes had become narrower and the treatment of the subject-matter was inoffensively farcical rather than satirical (430). The critic for the *B. Z. am Mittag* (431) thought that this was a substandard work for Kaiser and that the author had not really exerted himself intellectually while writing it. Hans Natonek (433) found the third act of this unambitious comedy too conventional. He complained that Kaiser had never before worked with such cheap devices as in the scene where Duchut agrees to a divorce because his father-in-law has just lost his position as a minister. The critic for the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (432) dismissed *Papiermühle* as a mediocre farce and described Duchut as only an average "Schwankfigur". As well, Kaiser was not exactly fair in that the contrast between the critic and the writer was too black and white (428, 432).

The applause in Leipzig was restrained (433) and conventional (428). Fritz Viehweg's production, which was uneven like Kaiser's original, emphasized the crudely comical aspects of the text in an attempt to add life to the thin plot (427, 430). The critic for the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* felt that these farcical additions were not inappropriate since the dialogue would have been insufficient on its own. Hans Böhm, whose acting became too caricatured in the third act, made Duchut resemble Alfred





Kerr (427, 432).

Later the same year, on 28.5.1927, *Papiermühle* was performed for the first time in Düsseldorf at the Schauspielhaus, where it ran for five performances. Gustav Lindemann's production with Franz Everth as Duchut and Peter Esser as Ollier was a rousing success (434). Viktor Mai (435), who described *Papiermühle* as a light work, as a mixture of two comedies (of a "Spiesser-Komödie" and a comedy on the writer and his biographer), would have liked a deeper treatment of the literary comedy. Another local critic (436) felt that, after his parody of "Kitsch" in *Margarine* and *Kolportage*, Kaiser himself was now succumbing to such sentimentality. Indeed, it was difficult to decide whether Peter Esser's occasional emotional outbursts towards the end of the play were intended seriously or not. Rather than presenting the comedy as straight "Kitsch", Lindemann's production tried for parodistic effects (436). Eduard Sturm's stage design presented deliciously the banal, wretched, God-forsaken summer retreat with plenty of sun-light but also with dust, smoke from the trains and an air of boredom (434, 435). The play opened to a bare stage and sound effects (a rousing chorus of bird noises) were used delightfully to set (and satirise) the summer atmosphere (436). Lindemann's excellent, highly effective production (434, 435) was really responsible for making such a great success of Kaiser's mediocre original. According to Linke, the local critics liked this sprightly production,



although they rejected Kaiser's text.<sup>90</sup> *Papiermühle* was revived at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus on 7.10.1927, when it was performed three times.

Also in 1927, Kaiser's comedy was presented at the Berlin Kammerspiele. Ihering (437) considered *Papiermühle* a light farce which offered no psychological insights into the problems between writers and their critics. In fact, the professions of Kaiser's two protagonists were unimportant – they were merely stock comic types and all that was important was the contrast between them. Likewise, the four provincial philistines were just conventional farcical characters. Still, although this was really a practice exercise, there were moments of dramatic effectiveness. Ihering was only bored when Ollier and Francine repeated in the second act what we already knew from the first act. Arthur Eloesser (438) thought that Duchut was a stupid figure because he lacked the characteristics of a biographer. If Kaiser was really trying to revenge himself through this work, then his attack was much too weak. Also, the subject-matter was very typical of farce. Eloesser felt that Kaiser had made things easy for himself by setting the comedy in the French provinces. The action could just as easily have taken place in Germany – only Kaiser would have had to exert himself more and greater originality would have been required. Ihering was surprised that such a slight, playful work, that such a one-act play in three acts was so

---

<sup>90</sup>Linke, p. 113. There were no reviews of this production available in the D-L-A, Düsseldorf.





successful in the Kammerspiele. Berthold Viertel's production, with Otto Wallburg as Duchut and Lothar Müthel as Ollier, was assured, clear and unproblematic. This was a charming performance; the acting was lively.

When *Papiermühle* was performed for the first time in Munich at the Schauspielhaus (1927), the critic for the *Völkischer Beobachter* (439) reported that it received rousing applause, especially at the end of the performance from the Kaiser supporters and the Jewish contingent in the audience. Still, he found the lively production entertaining, praising Schweikart's magnificent efforts as director, Horwitz' superb performance as Duchut and the comic acting of the other members of the cast. The third act, with its witty, original duel scene, was the most humorous of this spicy literary comedy, cleverly modelled on the French boulevard farce.

*Der Präsident* (published earlier as *Der Kongress*)

*Der Präsident*, a "Komödie in drei Akten", which had first been written in 1905-06 and which had been published as *Der Kongress* in 1914 (Weimar: R. Wagner Sohn), was revised in 1926-27 and published in 1927 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). Kenworthy described this comedy, with its three unities and French setting, as modelled on the French "pièce de chambre" and belonging to the same group as *Das*





*Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus*.<sup>91</sup> However, this is neither a psychological drama nor a "Frauenstück" but a conventional work which is most related to Kaiser's early comedies. The lawyer Blanchonnet, who aspires to enter Parisian high society, is a figure in the manner of Sternheim. Yet whereas Sternheim's middle-class characters are successful in dramas like *Die Hose* and *Der Snob*, Blanchonnet is a dismal failure. He loses all his money, is rejected by his daughter Elmire and does not rise socially. The downfall of this self-seeking opportunist and the absence of an happy ending are the major differences between this comedy and early comedies like *David und Goliath* and *Der mutige Seefahrer*, where Kaiser's petty-bourgeois protagonists emerge triumphant.

In revising his early comedy, Kaiser toned down the ending of *Der Kongress*, in which Lisa, the daughter of the lawyer Deutschendorf, ends up in a brothel, an innocent victim of her father's ambitions. In the new version, it is clear that the hotel thieves will abandon Blanchonnet's daughter and that he is the one who is punished.<sup>92</sup> Still, despite the revisions, *Der Präsident* is a poor comedy and the action is highly improbable. Schürer writes:

The plot of the play is extremely thin, and the dialogue and actions of the characters are too exaggerated to be effective. The humor is often forced [...] In spite of many deletions and improvements in the 1927 version, *Der Präsident*

---

<sup>91</sup>Kenworthy, p. 190.

<sup>92</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, pp. 132-33.



remains a rather flimsy comedy.'<sup>3</sup>

1928, the year of Kaiser's 50th birthday, saw four premieres and major revivals of *Gas I* in Berlin and of *Die Bürger von Calais* at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus. Rühle reports that, by 1928, Kaiser had become the most performed contemporary German dramatist.'<sup>4</sup> The premiere of *Der Präsident* took place at the Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt/M. on 28.1.1928. Bernhard Diebold (441) described the play as a mixture of intellectual satire and farce. He found the improbabilities of its frivolous plot (Blanchonnet having all his money in a suitcase; Elmire's naivety; Blanchonnet's unbounded idiocy, etc.) typical of farce and the caricatured figures similar to those in the French "Boulevard-Posse". For Werner Deubel (440), this was an extremely stupid work. Because he had run out of ideas, Kaiser had merely taken a stock type and put him in a new environment. At best, this "comedy" could be made into an intellectually undemanding film. Deubel could not understand why the Frankfurt Schauspielhaus was endangering its reputation as a culturally important theatre with such premieres. The production could do nothing to save what was Kaiser's most pathetic play to date.

Emil Faktor (442) felt that *Der Präsident* was performed at the Komödienhaus only because of a shortage of plays and because of the drawing power of Kaiser's name.'<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> Rühle, p. 867.

<sup>5</sup> As Emil Faktor left Germany in 1933 and did not return, this production must have taken place sometime between 1928





This production changed the ending – the hotel thieves did not allow Blanchonnet's daughter to flee from the hotel with them and she returned to her father. Faktor described this thin comedy, with its drawn-out, repetitious scenes, as a "Schwänkchen". He concluded that even an ideal cast would not have been able to overcome its deficiencies.

### *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*

*Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*, an "Opera buffa in einem Akt", was Kaiser's second collaboration with Kurt Weill. It was written and published in 1927 (Vienna: Universal-Edition AG). The premiere, of which no reviews are available, took place at the Leipzig Neues Theater on 18.2.1928.<sup>96</sup>

### *Oktoberstag*

*Oktoberstag*, a "Schauspiel in drei Akten", was written in 1927 and published in 1928 (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). It was translated into English (1928), into French (1929) and into Spanish (1929); it was premiered in English at The Forty-Ninth Street Theatre in New York on 4.9.1928. With its French setting, its three unities, small cast, female protagonist and "Schein-Sein" theme, *Oktoberstag* was another

-----  
<sup>95</sup>(cont'd)and 1933.

<sup>96</sup>Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 870. Schürer dates this production in Leipzig on 28 February, *Kaiser*, p. 134.



"Frauenstück",<sup>97</sup> another psychological drama in the style of *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus*. The theme of eroticism recurs in Catherine's seduction of Leguerche and in Leguerche's description, at the end, of the pleasures of her body. There is a triumph of inner reality as Marrien develops towards Catherine's position, eventually accepting that he is the father of her child. All they desire is to live in blissful romantic escapism on a secluded island away from human society. Marrien's slaying of the real father, the "Schlächtergeselle" Leguerche, symbolises the elimination of unpleasant external reality and the total victory of subjective illusions. Once more, the plot is contrived and the character motivation abrupt and unconvincing (Marrien's sudden reversal of character; Leguerche suddenly turning nasty after his previous reasonable behaviour).<sup>98</sup> Yet, for Schürer, *Oktoberstag* was "one of Kaiser's most conclusive" psychological dramas.<sup>99</sup> Steffens considered it one of the few important dramas of the many which Kaiser produced during the 1920's.<sup>100</sup>

-----  
<sup>97</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 144. Kenworthy also included *Oktoberstag* in his group modelled on the French "pièce de chambre" (which included *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus*), p. 190.

<sup>98</sup>Schürer writes: "This sudden change in Leguerche's behaviour — his refusal to accept payment and his desire to possess Catherine — is a weakness in the construction of the play. His actions are contradicted by his character and by his previous behaviour. He also knows that Catherine does not love him and that marriage is completely out of the question. It is, therefore, inexplicable why he is suddenly portrayed as a serious rival of Marrien" (*Kaiser*, p. 237, note 18).

<sup>99</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 144.

<sup>100</sup>Steffens, p. 100.





*Oktoberstag* was premiered on 13.3.1928 at the Hamburg Kammerspiele. Surprisingly, considering its similarity to *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, towards which the critics had often been unsympathetic, *Oktoberstag* was well received. It was seen as related to the themes of Kleist's *Die Marquise von O...* (443, 447) and of Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (444). Arthur Eloesser (444) thought that the Berlin theatres had made a mistake in allowing this work to be premiered in the provinces and in not premiering it themselves. Kaiser, almost too fleeting a playwright, had crystallised his talents here in a simple, clear drama which did not lack soul. The action was very clever and marvellously balanced. He felt that Kaiser's accomplished technique managed to overcome the improbabilities of the plot. Heinz Liepmann (443) considered this drama with its unusually delicate, inner development of the action a highpoint in Kaiser's "oeuvre". This was a powerful, impressive, theatrical work, a tragedy of surprisingly high standards; its technique was concise and clear without being forced. For Otto Schabbel (446), Kaiser was escaping into Romanticism. Still, the play's intellectualism, the compressed dialogue and the revelation of psychological powers created an unusual tension. P. A. Otte (448) thought that the sparkling, forward-moving dialogues compensated for the improbabilities of the psychological motivation.<sup>10</sup> Although the play's basic idea

-----  
<sup>10</sup> Cf. also review 445.





was slight and not totally convincing, Kaiser had presented an extremely entertaining, smoothly flowing and assured drama. The scene between Leguerche and Marrien, who was now in love with Catherine, was very powerful (444); the ending (the murder of Leguerche) was described as logical (444), as "harmlos" (446), as rather violent (448) and as symbolic (447).

Gustaf Gründgens' gripping production was a great success (443). Eloesser thought that for the performance to be convincing, Catherine had to be presented plausibly. Fortunately, the quiet Ellen Schwannecke was believable, as was Gustaf Gründgens (Marrien), although he did not quite seem right and lacked aristocratic refinement. This was a clear, flowing production which contrasted Leguerche's crass materialism with the aristocratic setting and which also contrasted the worlds of reality and imagination (447, 448). Eloesser praised the Hamburg Kammerspiele for presenting Kaiser's play ahead of Berlin but felt that the production could have been better and that the language could have been more distinct. Yet the serious Hamburg audience greeted the play enthusiastically and with loud, lasting applause (444, 448).

*Oktoberfest* was performed for the first time in Dresden at the Staatliches Schauspielhaus (16.8.1928) in a production directed by Josef Gielen, who had directed the premieres of *Der mutige Seefahrer* and *Der Protagonist* (as an opera) in Dresden and who was now regarded as one of the



best directors of Kaiser (452). Taking into account the prolific nature of Kaiser's writing, Felix Reichardt (450) was not surprised that many of his dramas still appeared crude and unfinished. This was also true, to a certain extent, of *Oktoberstag* with its mixture of styles, with its mixture of dry objectivity and fanatical mysticism, of realism and idealism. Reichardt found many aspects of the plot improbable: Marrien not noticing Catherine; the imagined wedding; Catherine's seduction of Leguerche; Marrien's love for Catherine and his acceptance of the child as his own and finally the ending – the murder of Leguerche and Juliette's knowledge of what has happened would prevent Marrien and Catherine from continuing to live together happily ever after. However, Reichardt conceded that, during the first two acts, Kaiser's fine dialogue made these improbabilities less apparent. Only in the third act, with its excessive sensationalism and insincere tirades, did it become more and more difficult to follow the action. As well, a second local reviewer (453), who described the play as a mixture of powerful realism and mystical fantasy, was unconvinced by Catherine's behaviour (the seduction of Leguerche; her claims that Marrien was the father) and by the ending. Wilhelm Russo (451) did not consider *Oktoberstag* one of Kaiser's best works in the light of more accomplished dramas like *Gas*, *Von morgens bis mitternachts* and *Nebeneinander*. Still, he saw the concise formulation and the virtuosity with which an extremely complex theme was turned





into a theatrically effective drama as typical of Kaiser.

Josef Gielen's excellent, harmonious production, which toned down some of the original's crude effects, presented *Oktoberstag* without an interval in one and a half hours (449, 450). The production illuminated the inner developments of this mysterious work (451). The acting in general was praised, although the ineffectiveness of the final act was blamed partly on the actors, who were less convincing here. Felix Steinböck could have been more passionate as Marrien and Adolf Wohlbrück as Leguerche spoke too loudly and indistinctly (450). There were differing reactions to Wohlbrück's interpretation of his role. Leo Francke (449) considered this powerfully Naturalistic performance the best of the evening;<sup>102</sup> for Russo, this humorous "Schlächtergeselle" was inappropriate. Still, the production was a well-deserved success for Kaiser, Gielen and the actors and was well applauded (449, 451).

Two weeks later (30.8.1928), *Oktoberstag* was performed for the first time in Berlin, at the Kammerspiele. Again, it received rousing applause (454, 456). Emil Faktor (460) was pleased that his suspicions that Kaiser was merely reworking *Die Marquise von O...* or Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, that he was presenting just an ordinary "Erpresserdrama" or a belated version of Ibsen, proved unfounded. He considered this play a good beginning to the season, although it offered no surprises. Despite the embarrassing opening scene

---

<sup>102</sup>At times, the wording of Francke's review is very similar to Pander's review (447) in Hamburg.



with Catherine's uncle Coste, who appeared almost like a figure from Sudermann, and its dated techniques, the main theme ("die Hoheit der Illusion") was particularly beautiful. Another Berlin critic (458) found the drama believable (apart from a few minor points in the third act) because of its logic and, what was unusual for Kaiser, because of its powerful, genuine emotional elements. Arthur Eloesser (459) wished that there were more writers who possessed Kaiser's ability to surprise the spectator and make him think. Yet he thought that it would have been better if Marrien had met the well-escorted Catherine in a different town.

For Erich Krafft (455), Kaiser's extremely complex play would have seemed comic or repulsive in many instances, if it had not been for Robert Forster-Larrinaga's production, which overcame its deficiencies. Forster-Larrinaga toned down the crude aspects and presented the drama as a discreet, elegant "Gesellschaftsstück". According to Faktor, this production was an artistic pleasure. The temptation to be loud was avoided; it was a clear production which made the symbolism and mysticism more accessible (460). The setting was a large, empty, elegant room with just two chairs; the characters addressed each other often at quite a distance in the manner of Racine or Corneille. Eloesser thought that this ceremony and the use of the setting for deliberate effects were not really necessary. Referring back to the Hamburg premiere, he felt that the most important





aspect of a production of *Oktoberstag* was whether the lovers were convincing and that the setting was really unimportant. Indeed, Mathias Wiemann as Marrien was convincing (459). In the role of Catherine, the talented Margarethe Köppke was unreal, visionary and angelic (455, 459). However, there were complaints that her diction could be improved (460) and that she was too much like a sleepwalker (459). For Eloesser, Albert Steinrück (Coste) behaved too much like a father and, instead, should have maintained a middle position of bourgeois convention between the poles of ecstasy and brutal realism. Oskar Homolka presented a vital, full-blooded, effective Leguerche (459, 460).

Forster-Larrinaga's marvellous, simple production was greeted by unusually loud applause (454, 455, 457); the audience were so convinced that no one laughed when Marrien claimed to be the father of Catherine's child (459).

The following month, on 25.9.1928, *Oktoberstag* was presented for the first time in Düsseldorf at the Schauspielhaus, where it was performed nineteen times – this number of performances of a Kaiser play in Düsseldorf was only surpassed by the Schauspielhaus productions of *Mississippi* and *Die Bürger von Calais*.<sup>103</sup> According to Linke, the local critics almost universally rejected Kaiser's play. Gustav Lindemann's disciplined production managed to avoid the danger, inherent in the text, of

-----  
<sup>103</sup>I could not find any reviews of this production in the D-L-A. Only some reviews of a "Gastspiel" by the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus in Gelsenkirchen were available.





degenerating into "Kitsch".<sup>104</sup>

The same month (Sept. 1928) also witnessed the first performance of *Oktoberfest* in Munich at the Schauspielhaus.<sup>105</sup> The critic for the *Völkischer Beobachter* (461) felt that Marrien's murder of Leguerche would have brought him fifteen years in jail. However, Kaiser had failed to present this outcome in a fourth act, which probably would not have been any better than the previous three, because of his own unfortunate experiences with the law!

Up to now, the play's eroticism and sexual themes had not aroused any of the moral disapproval which *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus* had provoked earlier. However, when *Oktoberfest* was presented as a "Gastspiel" by the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus at the Gelsenkirchen Stadthalle (Nov. 1928), the locals were less open-minded than elsewhere. The critic for the *Gelsenkirchener Zeitung* considered this the fourth production in recent weeks which was not suitable for young people. Although it was a fine production and although the drama did possess poetic qualities, it had to be rejected on account of its morally dubious content. In particular, he objected to Leguerche's cynicism and Catherine's predicament was too unpleasant for

-----  
<sup>104</sup>Linke, p. 113.

<sup>105</sup>Rühle refers to a production at the Munich Kammerspiele on 24.9.1928, directed by Schweikart and with Ruth Helberg as Catherine and Will Dohm as Leguerche, p. 868. The *Völkischer Beobachter* review (461), dated on 26.9.1928, gives no details of the production, apart from naming the theatre as the Schauspielhaus.



words.''' It was, therefore, not surprising that some adults in the audience walked out of the performance.

The *Gelsenkirchener Zeitung* received many letters from local citizens supporting its hostile response to such a "repulsive" work. One reader felt that the theatre had failed to fulfill its edifying function with such cynical modern dramas and that such sensual works threatened to undermine moral values.''' Moreover, the demand was made

-----  
 ''''Ehe man sich mit dem Inhalt des Stückes auseinandersetzt, müsste man zunächst die Handlung skizzieren. Und da ist es bedauerlich, feststellen zu müssen, dass wir das an dieser Stelle einfach nicht vermögen. Die ganze Vorfabel ist so befremdlich und für unsere sittlichen Anschauungen so undiskutierbar, dass wir uns eine Wiedergabe schenken wollen. Und was dem 'Schlächtergesellen' an Zynismen in den Mund gelegt wird, sucht an Eindeutigkeit seinesgleichen. Wir können Kaiser die Ehrlichkeit seines Wollens selbst in diesen brutalen Offenherzigkeiten nicht absprechen, wir vermögen ihm aber nicht zu folgen, wenn wir uns vor Augen halten, welche demoralisierenden Wirkungen eine solche Entblössung von Vorgängen haben muss, die für uns immer noch mit dem Schleier des grössten und tiefsten göttlichen Geheimnisses umkleidet sind. Mit leisem Erschrecken denkt man an die zahlreichen jungen Mädchen, die im Theater sassen und solche Auseinandersetzungen mit anhören mussten" (bs., *Gelsenkirchener Zeitung*, 22.11.1928).

''He wrote: "Man muss sich als Vater die Eindrücke vergegenwärtigen, die derartige Stücke mit ihrem frevelhaft sinnlichen Einschlag bei erwachsenen Söhnen, mehr aber noch bei erwachsenen Töchtern und der gesamten Frauenwelt auslösen. Welche seelischen Eindrücke können und müssen sich einstellen? Welche Gefahr bilden die Auswirkungen? [...] Der Bürger als Laie kann nicht wissen, was für einen Inhalt und welche Tendenz in den modernen Bühnenstücken liegt. Ihm fehlt auch die Zeit, sich vorher zu vergewissern, und im guten Glauben geht er mit seiner Familie zum Theater. Aber nicht um dort in Enttäuschungen und Gewissensbisse versetzt zu werden. *Oktoberfest* u. a. ist weder unterhaltend, noch erhebend, es ist künstlerische Skrupellosigkeit, die nicht verdient, öffentlich breit getreten zu werden, und die das Heilige der Menschenschöpfung in den Kot zu ziehen sucht. Das Innere des noch sittlich gesund eingestellten Menschen bäumt sich dagegen auf und er lehnt impulsiv einen Theaterstoff von solcher 'Güte' ab" (*Geisenkirchener Zeitung*, n.d., D-L-A).







that the forthcoming repeat performance of *Oktoberstag* in December should be cancelled. The *Gelsenkirchener Zeitung* believed that such plays should no longer be presented which threatened not only the morals of young people but also of adults! Perhaps, also, it was time to sever the links between Gelsenkirchen and the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus. There was sparse applause for Gustav Lindemann's production, which starred Peter Esser as Marrien, Fita Benkhoff as Catherine, Franz Everth as Coste and Hermann Greid as Leguerche.

When *Oktoberstag* was premiered at the Neues Theater in Frankfurt/M. (13.10.1928), Bernhard Diebold (462) did not consider Arthur Hellmer's production completely assured. He thought that *Oktoberstag* did not work on the stage and that reading the play aroused far deeper insights than watching a production which was too concrete and physical. Describing the drama as a "Meisterstück des Denkens", as "ein Bacchanal der Intellektualität", Diebold felt that, in contrast to Pirandello, whose plots were unclear and lacked depth, Kaiser had presented the action with great clarity. He was impressed by the play's structure and its rise in tension. However, the ending was not fully thought out and destroyed the work's symbolism (or the work's symbolism as interpreted by Diebold!). Marrien should have been able to triumph over Leguerche on an ideal, moral level without having to kill him. Diebold, one of those critics who understood a play even better than the author himself, could only see one



possible solution to the conflict – Catherine dying of "Weltschmerz".

### *Die Lederköpfe*

*Die Lederköpfe*, a "Schauspiel in drei Akten", was first written in 1927–28, revised in 1928 and published the same year (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). Just as Kaiser had been capable of presenting two opposing sequels to *Gas I* in *Hölle Weg Erde* and *Gas II*, just as *Die Bürger von Calais* and *Europa*, first published within a year of each other (in 1914 and 1915 respectively), had contradicted each other in advocating pacifism and militarism, so were *Oktoberstag* and *Die Lederköpfe*, both published the same year (1928), total opposites. In *Oktoberstag*, Kaiser's lovers desire to escape from social responsibility into an isolated, Romantic world of illusion; in *Die Lederköpfe*, the need for social revolution is presented. These fundamental contradictions within Kaiser's "oeuvre" make the overall picture of Georg Kaiser far more complex and problematic than is often assumed. Kenworthy describes Kaiser as "a true Expressionist" in the treatment here of his source, Herodotus' *History* – the subject-matter was made more universal in that the besieged city of Babylon is never named and the characters have been depersonalised (Darius is Der Basileus and Zopyrus Der Feldhauptmann). Also, a new



figure, *Die Tochter des Basileus*, was added.<sup>108</sup> There are many other Expressionist features: the mass scenes; the "Telegrammstil"; the themes of the "Neuer Mensch" and of pacifism; the father-daughter conflict and the grotesque contingent of "Lederköpfe", all looking alike. However, the setting is realistic and, unlike the "Stationendramen" *Von morgens bis mitternachts* and *Hölle Weg Erde*, *Die Lederköpfe* conforms to the three unities.

What is surprising, especially after Kaiser's distancing of himself from the "Neuer Mensch" in *Nebeneinander* and *Gats*, is that, in *Die Lederköpfe*, we have a successful, popular social revolution and a "Neuer Mensch" who is not rejected by the masses. The Feldhauptmann, "ein kopfloses Tier",<sup>109</sup> who through self-mutilation has dehumanised himself in order to capture an enemy town and to further his own ambitions, comes to understand his own lack of humanity. A "Neuer Mensch", he sacrifices himself so that the troops are provoked into slaying their ruler, the tyrant Basileus. Like Eustache and the Spazierer, we have a "Neuer Mensch" who is able to inspire his fellow citizens. The Feldhauptmann is successful because, through his actions, the troops and the "Volk" are incited to overthrow despotism. We are left at the beginning of the new society, as the Tochter, a second "Neuer Mensch", who has rejected the tyranny of her father, wraps a red cloth around her body

-----  
<sup>108</sup>See Kenworthy, p. 78.

<sup>109</sup>Kaiser, *Die Lederköpfe*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, III, 42.





and urges them all to march into the desert in order to rebuild what has been destroyed. Kaiser here denounces Basileus and all that he represents – despotism and the bloodshed, destruction, poverty and hunger caused by war. Instead, he advocates socially useful activities (farming, rebuilding), pacifism and humanity. Kaiser goes beyond the ideas of *Die Bürger von Calais* in that he realises now that despotism must first be overthrown through social revolt before peace on earth is possible.

From a modern perspective, in the light of historical developments in Germany, *Die Lederköpfe* is usually interpreted as an antifascist drama, as one of Kaiser's works which reveals his "entschiedenes sozialistisches und antifaschistisches Engagement".<sup>110</sup> For Steffens, Basileus could represent Hitler or another twentieth-century dictator and the Stadthauptmann a "Statthalter" or a "Gauleiter".<sup>111</sup> Although there are some possible allusions to the Nazis in the text,<sup>112</sup> it can also be argued that Kaiser plays safe in using an historical setting. *Die Lederköpfe* is not an explicit, class-conscious attack on Nazism but really it is a vaguer, more general parable of tyranny. Still, regarding

-----  
<sup>110</sup>Huder, "Zeittafel" to Kaiser, *Werke*, VI, 854.

<sup>111</sup>Steffens, p. 122.

<sup>112</sup>The language at times has anachronistic overtones, e.g. the Stadthauptmann advocates "Kraft und Gesundheit" (Kaiser, *Die Lederköpfe*, in *Werke*, III, 17) and his comment "Der Basileus gibt den Befehl – der Stadthauptmann vollstreckt den Befehl" (Kaiser, *Die Lederköpfe*, in *Werke*, III, 14) has an ominous ring. It seems to anticipate the defence used so frequently by Nazi collaborators during the trials on war crimes that "orders were orders" and had to be executed unquestioningly.



its content and technical accomplishment, we must agree with Steffens that this is one of Kaiser's major dramas of the 1920's.<sup>113</sup>

When *Die Lederköpfe* was premiered at the Neues Theater in Frankfurt/M. (24.11.1928), the critical response was cool. Werner Deubel (463) described it as a weak play which presented a pacifist falsification of history. He saw the historical content as merely a thin veil for spreading modern ideas and did not believe that Kaiser had written this drama from pacifist convictions. He was only able to speak favourably of the language of this heavy-handed, forced drama. For Gehrke (464), Kaiser could have offered something better in his anniversary year. Although he had now become political and had taken sides politically, he was only fighting war with its own means – horror and cruelty. Indeed, the many horrific features of the drama, which discussed burning contemporary issues in an historical setting, became tiresome and a torment. Bernhard Diebold (465) thought that *Die Lederköpfe* deserved to be performed, although he felt that Kaiser's dramas were more stimulating intellectually, when read. The ending, the daughter's proclamation of the "Neuer Mensch", was reminiscent of *Gas* and the utopianism of 1918. He wished that Kaiser's endings were as accomplished as his expositions; too often, as here, the "Denkspiel" degenerated to the "Denkerische". After the fine structure, the concentrated action and the tension of

---

<sup>113</sup>Steffens, p. 100.





the first one and a half acts, there was no inner development left for the third act. The division of the acts had to be moved forward and Basileus' long monologues needed to be cut. Moreover, he was not convinced by the transformation of a "Lederkopf" like the Feldhauptmann to humanitarianism. Deubel also found his conversion to pacifism incredibly sudden.

Ludwig Marcuse (466)<sup>114</sup> was disappointed by the play's outcome. At first, Kaiser's drama seemed as though it would analyse human relationships (the problematic relationship between the Tochter and the mutilated Feldhauptmann). But then, Kaiser deviated from this theme and allowed the figure of Basileus to dominate the action. After an opening which seemed to offer a deep examination of an archetypal human situation, all Kaiser proclaimed was that man was not faceless, anonymous cannon fodder but a human being – a message which was out of proportion to the play's structure. The anticlimactic ending was Schillerian rather than revolutionary in a modern sense. In contrast to Gerhke, Marcuse considered this a completely unpolitical work and did not find the attack on despotism politically motivated.

According to Marcuse, Arthur Hellmer's production vacillated between pathos and mathematics. There was some

---

<sup>114</sup>Ludwig Marcuse (1894–1971), who was a theatre critic for the *Frankfurter General-Anzeiger* from 1925–29, emigrated to America in 1933. Rühle writes of him: "In Frankfurt wurde er – wegen seiner draufgängerischen, direkten Kritik bald 'Der Alba der Kritik' genannt – der Antipode zu Diebold, vor allem durch seinen Widerspruch zu dessen Unruh-Verehrung und seine härtere Betrachtung der zweiten Phase der Weichertschen Intendanz" (p. 1172).



stylisation but Fritz Valk's *Basileus* was a "Schillertyrann" full of pathos and Elsa Tiedemann (Tochter) went too far in her outbursts of passion. This production, which took the play very seriously, was not a public success. It was greeted by hisses from the bored and some applause (463, 467).

Perhaps the lack of impact of this socially committed drama and the success of the escapist *Oktoberfest* were symptomatic of an historical period which was soon to surrender to fascism. Walter Schlieper (468), at the first performance of *Die Lederköpfe* in Krefeld (1929), felt that Kaiser, with these two new, contradictory plays, was giving German theatres the choice of whether they wanted tendentious or escapist works. However, whereas Düsseldorf and Cologne had decided to produce *Oktoberfest*, such a topical play like *Die Lederköpfe* had been left for small provincial towns like Krefeld.

### *Zwei Krawatten*

*Zwei Krawatten*, a "Revuestück in neun Bildern", was written and published in 1929 (Berlin: Alrobi). This lavish, large-scale revue, which had already been anticipated by the variety scenes in *Zweimal Oliver*, contains many Expressionist features. The open form is similar to the series of scenes in the "Stationendramen",<sup>115</sup> there is some

---

<sup>115</sup>See Kenworthy, pp. 81-82.





"Telegrammstil" and the ship setting (scenes three and eight), which symbolises through the division of the stage the class contradictions in society, is reminiscent of the ship scene in *Die Koralle* (Act II).<sup>116</sup> The waiter Jean is basically a "Neuer Mensch" who learns to reject his new-found riches in order to return to his faithful lover Trude, even if this means suffering poverty.<sup>117</sup> There is also a level of social criticism. Whereas the view of America had been positive in *Kolportage*, Kaiser is very critical here of this new capitalist society, which is actually presented on stage, unlike *Kolportage* and *Der mutige Seefahrer*, where we just have Americans visiting Europe. America is now a land of stock market speculators like Frau Robinson, who profiteer from man's basic needs (meat), of hypocritical senators (MacCarton) and corrupt businessmen, who wish to profit from Jean's connections in Washington. It is symbolic that Jean rejects the rich American Mabel and returns to Europe and to Trude.<sup>118</sup>

Yet, despite the social satire, *Zwei Krawatten* is essentially a light, witty comedy with, at times, elaborate, spectacular sets and a massive cast. Apart from Jean, the

---

<sup>116</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 135.

<sup>117</sup>Kenworthy describes Jean as "a New Man through his ultimate fidelity to the lasting values of his old life" (p. 83).

<sup>118</sup>However, Robert Kauf was not convinced by the attack on America: "These examples should suffice to show that the plot is so completely incredible and the American villains are so ludicrously overdrawn that one cannot take them seriously and is lead [sic] to suspect that what Kaiser satirizes here is not America, but the anti-American clichés of the period" ("Georg Kaiser, 'der Amerikanismus' und Amerika," in *Georg Kaiser Symposium*, p. 255).





characters are one-dimensional and do not develop. Trude, in particular, is almost too good to be true. As a revue, there is a certain popularism in the mixture of songs, music, dancing and even parody of the opera. The symmetrical plot (the two ship scenes, the two exchanges of ties) is highly unlikely and is indebted to the early comedies in its use of many improbable sudden turns of fortune. Once more, Kaiser uses a lottery ticket, an inheritance and chance meetings abound. The play's message is very simple, if rather hackneyed – riches cannot buy happiness and love is more important than money. All ends happily in a triumph of true love, as Jean and Trude, now a rich heiress, are united. Kenworthy describes *Zwei Krawatten* as "entertaining but not very significant";<sup>119</sup> for Schürer, Kaiser was returning to "old romantic clichés".<sup>120</sup>

*Zwei Krawatten* was premiered at the Berliner Theater on 5.9.1929 with music composed by Mischa Spoliansky. This premiere was a popular rather than a critical success. Ihering (470) referred back to his earlier remarks in his review of *Kolportage* (343) that Kaiser could become Germany's greatest writer of revues by satirising the clichés and sentimentality of this genre. However, he was disappointed by *Zwei Krawatten* because it did not represent a breakthrough to the new, modern revue but only a more accomplished version of the old one. Unfortunately, Kaiser's first revue presented the sentimentality and clichés of the

<sup>119</sup>Kenworthy, p. 81.

<sup>120</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 135.



genre seriously. Although it was simple, clear and dramatically effective, this was still just the conventional revue with its stock characters and features borrowed from the old "Volksstück" (the lottery, Trude's inheritance). Ihering, while acknowledging the work's technical brilliance, would have preferred a truly Berlin revue. Kaiser had taken a step in the wrong direction with this "Revuepösse" *Zwei Krawatten*. However, it would still be possible for Kaiser and Spoliansky to achieve popular success with a more modern revue.

Felix Hollaender (473) also considered this new departure for Kaiser a mistake. This revue was too tame, too insignificant and too light for a writer of Kaiser's calibre; it was not powerful and witty enough. Kaiser was unsuited to the role of popular revue writer and non-literary humourist. This was merely a "Nebenwerk", which deteriorated from scene to scene. Hollaender was not sure whether Kaiser was attempting a parody of the revue similar to his parody of trivial literature in *Kolportage*.<sup>121</sup> However, if this was the case, then the parody had failed. Instead, the simple, harmless scenes, with their partly sentimental, partly kitschy romanticism, were reminiscent of the nineteenth-century farce and "Volksstück". Otherwise, if

<sup>121</sup>Several of the critics at the Sept. 1929 production of *Kolportage* in Berlin interpreted *Zwei Krawatten*, which had been performed earlier the same month, in the light of *Kolportage*. Kurt Pinthus (358) saw *Zwei Krawatten* as an unsuccessful attempt at parodying the revue; Rolf Nürnberg (363) thought that Kaiser had turned to parody as a last resort here and Alfred Kerr (359), who objected to its clichéd themes, also described it as a parody.





*Zwei Krawatten* was intended as an attack on America, then the tempo was much too slow. In contrast, Ernst Heilborn (469) saw this light revue, which was similar to *Kolportage*, as ironising love and money. For Karl Strecker (472) and Oscar Bie (474), Kaiser was lowering himself in writing a revue. Bie felt that he was surrendering unconditionally to public tastes and would have expected more self-irony, more humour and satire.

Forster-Larrinaga's three-hour production, which starred Hans Albers as Jean, Marlene Dietrich as Mabel and Rosa Valetti as Frau Robinson, was a tremendous public success (470, 474).<sup>122</sup> This colourful, lively production with its dancing girls and variety acts was sentimental rather than ironic (358, 470, 472). A popularistic presentation, it tried to avoid becoming too literary by mixing sentimentality, "Kolportage", many naked legs and the latest variety tricks. Forster-Larrinaga just filled out Kaiser's thin plot with features borrowed from the traditional revue (473). Ihering praised the tap-dancers Moore and Lewis and the costumes of this pleasant, pretty production. He complained that Mischa Spoliansky's melodious music glossed over the critical, aggressive tendencies in Kaiser's text, instead of accentuating them.<sup>123</sup> For Bie (474), the music was not terribly ingenious, but at least it

-----  
<sup>122</sup> There is a photograph of the production in Steffens, p. 135.

<sup>123</sup> According to Schürer, Spoliansky was one of the more popular composers of the day along with Friedrich Hollaender and Marcellus Schiffer, *Kaiser*, p. 135.



was appropriate and effective, combining jazz, finales and popular songs. He thought that the music was, on the whole, too routine and that Spoliansky was too heavy-handed here (475). For Hollaender, although the music was impressive technically and pleasant, it lacked the power of Spoliansky's earlier creations.

The actors were described as good but not the best available (474). One reviewer (471) complained that Hans Albers had been miscast and was too cynical for the romantic part of Jean. Marlene Dietrich, who had yet to achieve her breakthrough in Josef von Sternberg's *Der blaue Engel* (1929-30), made little impact as Mabel. However, this was not considered the most productive of roles (470). Bie (474), who praised Stern's quick-changing sets, especially the mirrored room, felt that the critic had to lower his literary criteria in assessing this mixture of variety and cinema. Yet, as the quality of Kaiser's writing sank, the audience's applause became greater. The actors were greeted by rousing applause (472, 473). It would appear safe to assume that the overwhelming popular success of *Zwei Krawatten* can be attributed more to the spectacular production rather than to the merits of Kaiser's text.

When *Zwei Krawatten* was performed for the first time in Leipzig at the Schauspielhaus over the Christmas period in 1930, it was a fantastic success and was greeted by thunderous applause from the capacity audiences. Again, the colourful revue features of the production more than



compensated for the weaknesses in Kaiser's text (481). The performance combined a Leipzig cast with variety acts imported from Berlin and a guest conductor, Dr. Hans Kainz. It was really the high quality of the Berlin "stars" which delighted the provincial audience, not accustomed to such calibre entertainers. Berlin dancing girls displayed their physical attributes while dancing with cardboard negroes, the "Exzentriktänzer" Charly D'Argovie was excellent as a drunken tap-dancer but the highpoint of the evening was the splendid comic singing of the six Comedian Harmonists, a vocal jazz group (477, 478, 483).

Still, despite the appeal of such extraneous features, the text itself came under attack from some critics. *Zwei Krawatten* was described by Hans Natonek (478) as a "Nebenarbeit", as genuine "Kolportage", which failed in its attempt at parody and which lacked the naivety of the "Volksstück". Egbert Delpy (481) also saw the revue as basically "Kolportage", as old-fashionedly romantic and excessively sentimental. Politically radical reviewers were especially dissatisfied by the play's subject-matter and style. The critic for the Leipzig *Arbeiterpolitik* (479), who disliked the lack of intellectual content, complained that the revue was catering to the philistines in that, instead of depicting the class struggle, Kaiser gave the fairy-tale, escapist solution of lotteries and rich Americans. Instead of unsettling the philistines, Kaiser merely pandered to their complacency. All this work represented was the decline





of bourgeois culture. The reviewer for the *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung* (480) condemned Wilhelm Berthold's production as merely providing rotten, stinking amusement for the Leipzig bourgeoisie over the holiday period. *Zwei Krawatten* only confirmed to him Kaiser's total bankruptcy as a writer which had also been demonstrated by the earlier Leipzig production of *Hellseherei*. This was not even a revue, just a below-average farce with songs and dated stock comic characters. The words of the song in scene seven ("Man muss dem Menschen seine Chance lassen -/ denn seine Chance ist des Menschen Gott") were interpreted as indicating undisguised support for the ruling class, as an apology for the unscrupulous behaviour of speculators and industrialists. For the critic from the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (482), the American scenes were too drawn-out and the revue as a whole, apart from some songs, was not as biting and as witty as the author's usual writing. Kaiser seemed to be undermining his own qualities in pandering too much to the tastes of the philistines.

Two productions of *Zwei Krawatten*, the first Munich performance at the Kammerspiele (Feb. 1930) and the 1932 Augsburg production, were reviewed in the *Völkischer Beobachter*. Surprisingly, the review (476) of Forster-Larrinaga's Munich production with Therese Giehse as Frau Robinson was favourable. The revue was seen as a marvellous mockery of an America lacking in culture and only interested in business and external show. This cheerful work



affirmed European values, feeling and inner culture over American capitalism. There was lively applause for the quick-moving production. However, two years later, *Zwei Krawatten* was one of a number of "Schund- und Schmutzstücke" which were attacked in an article in the *Völkischer Beobachter* entitled "Die unmoralische Anstalt.

Zeittheaterblüten – eine grauenerregende Übersicht") on 9.1.1932. In Augsburg, the reviewer (484) of Pabst's production was not sure whether Kaiser was trying to attack American "Unkultur". Yet all that he had achieved was "Kitsch".

*Zwei Krawatten* was also filmed, although very unsuccessfully, by Weichert and Felix Basch. The screening of the film, which starred the singer Michael Bohnen, at the Universum in Berlin resulted in a scandal as the disappointed audience found it laughable. The objection was raised that the play had been transposed to the screen too literally. Whereas the revue had worked on the stage with its mixture of styles (of parody, revue, operetta, opera and the grotesque), the same presentation on film was ineffective. Moreover, the sound quality was really poor.<sup>124</sup>

-----  
<sup>124</sup>This information is based on an anonymous, undated review in the GKC. I could not find any other details of this filmed version.





## *Hellseherei*

*Hellseherei*, a "Gesellschaftsspiel in drei Akten", was first written in 1928-29, revised in 1929 and published the same year (Potsdam: Kiepenheuer). With its female protagonist, small cast, three unities and "Schein/Sein" theme, it was another "Frauenstück", another psychological drama in the manner of *Das Frauenopfer*, *Der Brand im Opernhaus* and *Oktobertag*. Vera's love for Viktor, her husband, is a temple isolated from sordid reality; it is an exclusive, private love, a refuge from cruel external reality. She is willing to accept the loss of her ring in order to preserve her inner reality, her illusion of Viktor's fidelity. She knows that, if she finds the ring, the clairvoyant's second prediction of Viktor's adultery would also be true. When the Dame reveals that she was with Viktor and that their behaviour was harmless, Vera drives her off triumphantly, wins back Viktor and their love is restored. With *Hellseherei*, Kaiser tried to cash in on the contemporary popularity of clairvoyancy. According to Schürer, the character of Sneiderhan was based on the clairvoyant Erik Jan Hanussen, who had helped solve criminal cases in the 1920's and who had given public performances at the Berlin Scala.<sup>125</sup> However, of the "Frauenstücke" treated so far, this must be considered the most trivial and the least convincing. The plot is shallow, the characterisation contrived.

---

<sup>125</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 145 and p. 237, note 20.



According to Huder and Kenworthy, *Hellseherei* was only premiered at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus on 19.10.1929.<sup>126</sup> However, *Die schöne Literatur* reported that Kaiser's "Gesellschaftsspiel" was premiered simultaneously in seven theatres on 19.10.1929 – in addition to Düsseldorf, at the Kammerspiele of the Stadttheater in Lübeck; at the Landestheater, Stuttgart; at the Stadttheater, Würzburg; at the Stadttheater, Giessen; at the Stadttheater, Brieg and at the Landestheater, Oldenburg.<sup>127</sup>

The Stuttgart premiere of *Hellseherei* raised many critical doubts. Helmut Burkert (485) complained that the psychological background to the action was not explained enough and that the play was empty. He condemned the work as meaningless, unintelligent and only slightly entertaining. A second local reviewer (487) felt that *Hellseherei*, which was not intended as a serious drama but merely as a "Gesellschaftsspiel", was not a total success because of its contradictory mixture of serious and comic elements. He found the third act, in particular, anticlimactic. The critic for the *Darmstädter Tageblatt* (486) was also disappointed by the ending. The smooth transformation of the three main characters and the complete justification of clairvoyancy appeared cheap compared to the earlier

-----  
<sup>126</sup>Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 876 and Kenworthy, p. 203.

<sup>127</sup>*Die schöne Literatur*, 30 (1929), 613. I have three reviews of the Stuttgart premiere and two reviews referring to a Lübeck Uraufführung, although neither is dated. In addition, the *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt* of 22.10.1929 (review 494) referred to seven simultaneous premieres of *Hellseherei*.





excellent development of the action. Elwenstoeck's production starred Max Marx, who presented an overly grotesque Sneiderhan (487). The reports of the public response were mixed. According to Burkert, a few Kaiser fans applauded while the other spectators were left unconvinced; others reported that there was some applause, although the play was not nearly as effective as earlier Kaiser works (487) and that there was rousing, enthusiastic applause (486).

Likewise, the critics at the Lübeck premiere had misgivings towards Kaiser's text. *Hellseherei* was described as improbable, tasteless and superficial, as a weak "Gesellschaftsspiel" which failed to attain the heights of great comedy (489). For another reviewer (488), there was no serious attempt to deal with the problems of clairvoyancy. He felt that this technically accomplished bourgeois "Gesellschaftsstück" did not go beyond superficial psychological analysis and offered no more than a pleasant evening. The play's message that young wives should be on their guard against attractive female "friends" was not exactly new. Still, he concluded that a skillfully constructed "Gesellschaftsstück" was better than a stammered Expressionist "cri de coeur". Dr. Otto Hahn's production was marred by poor acting and poor casting. Edith Künzel (Vera) was just a beginner and her transformation at the end came too much as a surprise; Karl Moran was unsuited to his role as Viktor (488, 489).





The Düsseldorf premiere of *Hellseherei*, which was performed ten times, was no more successful. By now, the critics were starting to write off Kaiser as a dramatist. His plays were getting worse and worse as the quality of his writing deteriorated (493, 498). Wernher Witthaus (498) was disappointed by this poor play, which was a long way from the standard of *Die Bürger von Calais*. The critic for the *Düsseldorfer Stadtanzeiger* (499) wondered whether Kaiser was at the end of his powers, considering this work and *Oktoberfest*. For another reviewer (500), this drama was a bitter disappointment and its author should have been farsighted enough to anticipate its total failure. Kaiser could not continue in this direction. This weak drama was described as too conventional and as lacking dramatic power and the bitter-sweet irony of the French "Gesellschaftsspiel" (491). There were many objections to various aspects of the text: the third act was an anticlimax (500); the sudden, unmotivated ending was a wretched "Happyend-Saltomortale" (497); this ending was hardly convincing, the plot was thin and illogical (490); it was difficult to understand why Vera was so slow to see through her "friend", the Dame (495, 498), and even Kaiser's technical ability had failed – the structure was drawn-out and boring (490). It seemed amazing that such a trite, insipid play had been premiered simultaneously by seven theatres (494).



*Hellseherei* was disappointing for those who expected the problem of clairvoyancy to be treated in depth. Kaiser's presentation was considered superficial and Sneiderhan only a peripheral figure in the play as a whole. Moreover, the arguments behind Kaiser's positive attitude towards clairvoyancy were not convincing (491). Some critics, in the light of *Kolportage*, even thought that Kaiser was attempting to parody the genre of kitschy "Gesellschaftsstücke". Unfortunately, Franz Everth's production "misunderstood" these parodistic intentions, presenting the drama seriously, with merely some slight ironic undertones (493). Walter Schlieper (496), who saw *Hellseherei* as *Kolportage* applied to a more topical theme, would have liked the parody to have been developed from the figure of Sneiderhan. Instead, Everth presented clairvoyancy and the happy ending seriously. The Marxist critic for *Freiheit* (492) thought that the plot, with its hysterical bourgeois characters and the unbelievable triumph of clairvoyancy, had little significance for working people. Kaiser seemed to be catering to the needs of the bourgeoisie with such undemanding, harmless works, lacking in intellectual content.

However, as Gerth Schreiner (495) reported, this drama, with its trendy theme of clairvoyancy and its snobbish interest in fine clothes and other fashions, was very poorly received by the (bourgeois) audience, who hardly seemed amused by the events on stage. Besides Kaiser's weak text,





blame for this unsuccessful evening can also be attributed to Everth's ponderous production, which does not seem to have been of the quality normally associated with the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus (491). For Witthaus, the production was hardly better than the text and, despite the occasional good moment, the overall effect was one of drawn-out boredom. The two main female actresses, Charlotte Kühlmann (Vera) and Sonja von Hadding (Dame), were merely beginners (494, 495) and Fritz Valk did not seem really suited to his role as Viktor (499). The production emphasized the figure of Sneiderhan and Luis Rainer's performance as the clairvoyant was considered the highpoint of the evening (500). Only this lively piece of acting saved one critic from falling off his seat in boredom (494). Sneiderhan was presented as an old-fashioned fanatic with a touch of fantasy, who passionately believed in his own ability. But not all the critics were happy with this interpretation. Schreiner felt that Rainer had misinterpreted the role and would have preferred Sneiderhan to have been portrayed like a modern clairvoyant – partly genuine, partly a charlatan. There was some applause, mainly for Rainer (490).

### *Mississippi*

*Mississippi*, a "Schauspiel in drei Akten", was written in 1928–29 and published in 1930 (Berlin: Kiepenheuer). With



this play, Kaiser continued his attack on American capitalism. He evokes the atmosphere of the 1920's, a time of social turbulence, of class conflict and popular unrest. New Orleans represents the evil big city, a city possessed by greed, where the inhabitants live by the creed of the stock market. The motivating force of this American society is the desire for profit; economic expansionism is a means of increasing political power in that the export of surplus goods is used to subjugate foreign countries. Once more, the theme of "Siedlertum", which had been advocated and rejected to differing degrees in dramas like *Gas I* and *II*, *Hölle Weg Erde* and *Gats*, returns. However, whereas in *Gas I* and *II* this life-style is only discussed as a possible alternative, whereas in *Gats* the leader of the "Siedler" comes to reject this idea and whereas in *Hölle Weg Erde* we are left only at the beginning of the new society, here in *Mississippi* this communal, agricultural form of existence is actually depicted. The members of Noel Kehoe's religious sect, who wish to destroy New Orleans by not allowing the flood to be diverted, reject the capitalist system, which alienates nature's goods in profiteering from man's basic needs. They only produce enough food for themselves and are willing to share poverty rather than become part of an economic system which they despise. Of course, from the perspective of the ruthless capitalist state, this way of life, this failure to produce surplus profit amounts to "Produktionssabotage"! <sup>1 2 8</sup>

---

<sup>1 2 8</sup>Kaiser, *Mississippi*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, II, 684.





Force is, therefore, used to remove the sect members from their land so that New Orleans might be saved.

Apart from its topical social content and the theme of "Siedlertum", *Mississippi* has several other Expressionist features: some "Telegrammstil", the powerful mass scene, the theme of the "Neuer Mensch" and the final triumph of pacifism. Although the ending is rather abrupt and unmotivated, Kehoe and his former wife Doris are both changed, as the social drama gives way, anticlimactically, to the private love of two individuals. Doris, who had betrayed Kehoe's true aims to the Staatskommissar, Stimson, now declares her love for Kehoe and sacrifices her life to be with him. Kehoe, who had earlier advocated the destruction of New Orleans and had wanted to shoot a soldier, now realises that violence is inhuman. He did wrong in trying to raise himself arrogantly to God's level. There is a certain escapism as the social issues are relegated to the background and true love triumphs over death with Doris and Kehoe drowning together in the flooding Mississippi.

Yet, despite all the Expressionist elements, this is not an extreme, ultra-modern Expressionist drama. There is a certain realism to the message — the idealism of the settlers is destroyed by the ruthless American state which puts profit before human well-being. Despite the recent *Die Lederköpfe*, Kaiser distances himself here from the Expressionist idea of universal regeneration. Unlike *Hölle Weg Erde*, utopianism is firmly rejected, social dreams are





denied and mass transformation is no longer possible. Now, only the individual can find fulfillment.<sup>129</sup> For Schürer, although *Mississippi* belonged "thematically [...] to Kaiser's Expressionist plays", it was "a realistic drama".<sup>130</sup> This drama, with its powerful scenes, its rich themes and conflicts, has been recognised quite rightly by Steffens as one of Kaiser's few significant plays of the 1920's.<sup>131</sup>

The premiere of *Mississippi* on 20.9.1930 was another "Massen-Uraufführung" with sixteen theatres producing the play simultaneously.<sup>132</sup> The reaction to the performance at the Munich Prinzregenten-Theater was mixed. For Herbert Saekel (504), this was a typical Kaiser drama, with its good points outweighing its weaknesses. In particular, the second act was lively and concentrated, although the third act was

-----  
<sup>129</sup>Kehoe: "Du [Doris] liegst bei mir. Ich fühle dich. Du bist aufgebrochen – aus allen Scharen, die sich nicht überreden lassen – allein. Ist es nicht viel? Kann mehr gewonnen werden –: dein klopfendes Herz bei meinem klopfenden Herzen? – – Vielleicht einmal – – vielleicht niemals – – –" (Kaiser, *Mississippi*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, II, 700).

<sup>130</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 124 and p. 125.

<sup>131</sup>Steffens, p. 100.

<sup>132</sup>Huder lists nine premieres: at the Prinzregenten-Theater, Munich; the Hessisches Landestheater, Darmstadt; the Schauspielhaus, Bremen; the Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf; the Landestheater, Oldenburg; the Robbeling-Bühne, Hamburg [I have the Deutsches Schauspielhaus]; the Stadttheater, Magdeburg [I have the Wilhelmstheater]; the Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt/M. and the Schauspielhaus, Dresden – Kaiser, *Werke*, VI, 878. *Die schöne Literatur*, 31 (1930), 567 lists a further seven premieres: at the Landestheater, Karlsruhe; the Landestheater, Stuttgart; the Staatstheater, Kassel; the Stadttheater, Würzburg; the Stadttheater, Mainz; the Stadttheater, Konstanz and the Nationaltheater, Mannheim. Of these, the Mannheim, Mainz, Kassel, Karlsruhe and Würzburg premieres are all verified by reviews in my possession.



somewhat of an anticlimax and the pathos of the ending seemed out of place. Alfred Mayerhofer (502), who saw the final triumph of love as overcoming the two extremes of the state and asceticism, thought that the motivation of Doris' appearance at the end was contrived. The ending, which was inappropriate for such an abstract "Ideendrama", was unbelievable and weak. He concluded that the inconsistencies of Doris' character would prevent the work from becoming a lasting success. Werner Richter (503), who felt that the drama deteriorated after the excellent exposition and became too vague, found the debate between Kehoe and Stimson too superficial. The most negative was the reviewer for the *Völkischer Beobachter* (501), who was pleased that *Mississippi* had only provided two hours of boredom. He could well understand Doris leaving a deluded pauper like Kehoe, but was not convinced by Doris' self-sacrifice to be with Kehoe at the end, after her betrayal of him to Stimson and especially taking into consideration that Kehoe was responsible for the death of their son. Surprisingly, this critic described the apologist of the ruthless American capitalist system, Stimson, as speaking "in manchester-liberalem Geiste"! The characters were merely "Papierschemen", lacking in life, and the actors endeavoured in vain to turn these schematic figures into real human beings. There was also too much of a tendency towards long diatribes in dreadful "Papierdeutsch". At least Leo Pasetti's set for the third act was very beautiful and the





technical effects were excellent. According to this critic, there was applause from the predominantly Jewish contingent of Kaiser supporters, while the majority of the spectators went home disappointed! Others complained that the acting was not completely unified (504) and that this was a sterile, provincial production (503). Yet there was good applause for Karl Hans Böhm's mediocre production (503).

*Mississippi* had little success when it was premiered at the Schauspielhaus in Frankfurt/M. The public reaction was very cool and there was weak applause (507). As in Munich, the third act, the ending and Doris' behaviour were all criticised. Although the audience had been interested by the first two acts, it rejected completely the anticlimactic third act (506). Geck (505) considered the clash of ideas in the second act the work's dramatic highpoint but then complained that the play degenerated into the private world. He found Doris' final transformation contrived, unmotivated and inconsistent with her previous behaviour. Eugen Felber's production could not save this final act (506).

Elsewhere in the provinces, *Mississippi* provoked varying responses. In Mainz, the premiere was an overall success despite the over-lyrical ending and Kaiser's failure to decide between the alternatives of the capitalist state and Christian-communist asceticism (508); in Mannheim, where the play's ending did not seem totally satisfactory, the good number of spectators applauded mainly the actors and Storz's lively production (509); in Magdeburg, *Mississippi*



was successful despite the rather abrupt ending (512) and Baumbach's production in Karlsruhe was well received, again despite a disappointing third act (513). The Kassel premiere was also very successful, although the use of slides was boring and unnecessary (511). As well, Kaiser's work was a great success in Hamburg mainly because of Arnold Marlé's excellent production. Still, Maria Eis was a little too aggressive as Doris to make her later sudden transition into a loving, self-sacrificing wife completely convincing (515). However, the reception of Karl Ebert's realistic production in Darmstadt was somewhat cooler (510), and in Würzburg the public were rather reserved towards such a problematic drama (514).

The premiere at the Landestheater in Oldenburg was unusual, because, as far as I am aware, this was the first occasion on which the Nazis actually interrupted the performance of one of Kaiser's plays with public protests. The local critics agreed that this was a fine performance and even the Nazi paper, the *Südwestdeutscher Freiheitskämpfer* (518), described Hellmuth Götze's production as excellent. Before the play started, slides showing newspaper reports of the flood, a map and a picture of Kaiser were projected onto the wall (517). Alfred Wien (516) described the fantasy of the last act, as reality gave way to mysticism, as very effective. He praised Paul Klinger and Gerda Weissmann in the main roles and the Landestheater for staging this premiere. For Wien, Kaiser's serious





intentions, the logical development of his ideas and their dramatic, powerful presentation on the stage overcame his critical doubts towards this extremely topical work. He was sceptical of the sincerity of the sect-members because he considered their self-inflicted poverty not an act of humility but rather a protest against those who possessed more. Indeed, at the basis of this religious sect was Kehoe's hatred, arising out of betrayed, disappointed love. Wien thought that paradise on earth was not to be achieved through hatred, violence, chaos and revolution. Instead, justice on earth was only possible through a new love amongst mankind, like that between Kehoe and Doris, representatives of two opposing social forces, who had now been reconciled. The reporter for the *Nachrichten für Stadt und Land* (520) saw *Mississippi* as presenting the absurdity of the settlers' naive communism, which was only destructive. For the critic from the *Oldenburger Landeszeitung* (517), the third act was too static. There was no development, there was no intensification and Doris merely changed from one camp to the other.

During the first act, some of the local Nazis, who had joined the audience, interrupted the performance with whistling and heckling. However, at the end of the act, their dissent was drowned out by the lively applause of almost all the spectators. One protester left the theatre during the interval to the Nazi chants of his companions, after Götze, the "Intendant", who had been warned beforehand





about this planned protest, had asked a policeman to deal with the incident. The performance was then completed without further disturbance (519). By the time the story reached the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (524), a "large number" of Nazis had turned the evening into a "wüsten Theaterskandal"!

Ihering, who reported that the Nazis had increased their number of seats in Oldenburg during the last town elections from one to eighteen and that there was a Nazi cell in the orchestra there, thought that they had protested against *Mississippi* because they had confused it with Brecht and Weill's *Mahagonny*.<sup>133</sup> Schürer, who had a different explanation, writes about *Mississippi*:

his [Kaiser's] plea for a more equitable division of the goods of this earth cannot be overlooked; indeed, it was probably the reason why the National Socialists in Oldenburg tried to disrupt the performance. Ihering thinks that they had mistaken it for Brecht's opera *Mahagonny* (1929), but Kaiser's advocacy of pacifism and communism was cause enough for the Fascists to attack the play.<sup>134</sup>

However, the historical situation was not as clear-cut as Schürer's statement implies.

It is true that a journalist for the *Nachrichten für Stadt und Land* overheard the local Nazis during the interval complaining that communism was being promulgated and religion scorned. However, the *Gothaer Abendblatt* (523) reported that, on the day before the performance, the local Nazis thought that the play was concerned with incest — possibly because the settlers addressed each other as

<sup>133</sup>H. Ihering, 13.11.1930, *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*, III (Berlin: Aufbau, 1961), 111-14.

<sup>134</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 125.



"Bruder" and "Schwester"! According to this report, the Nazis marched into the theatre in order to preserve public morality. As there were no references to incest during the first act, they had to search for other "objectionable" features in Kaiser's play. Consequently, they heckled whenever there were any condescending references to God. The reviewer for the Nazi *Südwestdeutscher Freiheitskämpfer* objected to *Mississippi* on different grounds. He complained that Kaiser was too half-hearted a writer, that he compromised too much with the Right and Left, that Kaiser was too vacillating to make a clear decision either for materialism or idealism. He would have preferred a more resolute attack on the materialism represented by New Orleans. Also, the advocate of moral values was treated too unsympathetically. This reviewer did not object to Kaiser's "pacifism" or "communism" but to the fact that he was too "lahm", that his social criticism of the just and the unjust was too balanced. If Kaiser wanted to present a "Weltanschauung", then it had to be one which was powerful and which was able to give the spectator strength and conviction. What was needed was not "ein elender Schmarren" like *Mississippi*, not a boring *Penthesilea*, but powerful dramas like *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* and Kolbenheyer's *Heroische Leidenschaften*.

Yet in 1930 these Nazi protesters constituted only a small, isolated part of the audience. It was still possible for their weak, ineffectual protests to be quashed. By





drowning out this protest with their lively applause, the respectable members of the audience showed that they were not willing, at this time, to allow a "Diktatur der Dummheit" to take over in the local theatre (520). The press also denounced the protests as inappropriate and were pleased that this dissent had been crushed straight away (516, 519, 523). Even the reviewer for the *Südwestdeutscher Freiheitskämpfer* expressed his disapproval towards the behaviour of those over-zealous young spectators who voiced their disgust instead of silently displaying their contempt. The *Elbinger Zeitung* (522) reported that, in contrast to Oldenburg, the leading rightwing papers in Hamburg had greeted the premiere of *Mississippi* there favourably.

By 1930, political attitudes in the Weimar Republic had polarised to such an extent that Kaiser now came under attack not only from the Nazis but from both political extremes. When *Mississippi* was premiered in Düsseldorf, it was again criticised for political reasons – but from a different perspective to that of the Nazis. Gerth Schreiner, writing in the Düsseldorf *Volkszeitung* (528), saw the play as symptomatic of the situation of bourgeois literature in that the last sparks of revolutionary commitment were being suffocated by old-fashioned, burned-out ideas. Whereas the world proletariat were striving for a better future with a new ethos, whereas the Indian bourgeoisie were heroically resisting British colonialism, Kaiser was escaping into a romanticism of American settlers, pious songs and old ideas.



Because Kaiser could offer no solution to the confusion of the contemporary period, he had regressed to the ideas of the Classical world. Noel Kehoe, who had come to realise that he had to die because he had arrogantly raised himself up to God's level, was just like a genuine Classical hero; his thoughts while dying were similar to those of Karl Moor. For Schreiner, the "Kitsch" of this sentimental "Familiendrama" could not really hide its intellectual poverty, although he did acknowledge that, technically, it was well constructed. Likewise, the reviewer for the Aachen *Volksfreund* (531) found the ending sentimental and Doris' transformation unconvincing.

More extreme than Schreiner was the critic for the Düsseldorf *Freiheit* (527), who accused Kaiser of deliberately falsifying historical events. Whereas the American farmers, who represented an important reserve army of the American revolution and who needed to unite with the negroes and the white industrial proletariat behind the American Workers' Party, had actually engaged in armed guerilla warfare with the government troops,<sup>135</sup> Kaiser had turned the settlers into passive resisters in the style of Gandhi and had also added, unfortunately, a religious dimension.<sup>136</sup> This critic denounced their passive resistance

-----  
<sup>135</sup> According to Robert Kauf, the *New York Times* reported on 27.4.1927 that an "armed opposition of 2,000 men" resisted the breaching of the dam, *Georg Kaiser Symposium*, p. 257.

<sup>136</sup> This is not strictly accurate. Although the settlers as a group do not take up arms, they advocate the destruction of New Orleans and Kehoe tries to shoot the soldier who has to blow up the dam.





as only serving the interests of the ruling class. The failure of Gandhi's endeavours in India testified to the futility of such tactics (this was still only 1930!). Yet he conceded that the play's three acts were dramatically effective and skillfully constructed.

Gustav Lindemann's production ran for twenty performances, making *Mississippi* the most performed Kaiser play at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus after *Die Bürger von Calais*. Despite their different political persuasions, the critics were generally agreed that this was an excellent, marvellous production (527, 528, 529). The mass scenes, for which Lindemann used the theatre's entire ensemble (as he had done in the fourth act of *Gas I*),<sup>137</sup> were considered the highpoint of the production (528). Franz Everth offered a fine performance as Kehoe (531) and Fritz Valk's Nathan, with his simple, revolutionary Christianity, was particularly moving (528). Less convincing was Cornelia Gebühr as Doris (528, 531). Still, the evening was a great success and the capacity audience responded with rousing applause (527, 530). This was Lindemann's last Kaiser production. On 16.5.1932, Louise Dumont died and during the Nazi period Lindemann was forbidden to take part in artistic activities. Despite this ban and although he was a Jew, he did not emigrate.<sup>138</sup>

The first performance of *Mississippi* in Berlin took place at the Volksbühne (Nov. 1930). Many of the same points

---

<sup>137</sup>Linke, p. 114.

<sup>138</sup>See Linke, pp. 12-13.





were made here as in the provinces. Norbert Falk (532) described the second act, with its clash of ideas, as one of the best which Kaiser had ever written and the arrival of the soldiers after the debate as the play's dramatic highpoint. However, the third act was weaker as the arguments were suddenly dropped and the audience was left with an empty private fate. For Falk, this "Schlussapotheose" was merely belated Ibsen; it was insincere, theatrical, lacking inner conviction, "eine pathetische Lüge". Emil Faktor (533), who was pleased by the first two lively, interesting acts, complained that the play's ideas degenerated to a conventional "Gefühlsdrama". This tragedy of old-fashioned love trivialised the work's intellectual content and deviated from its main ideas. Fritz Engel (534), who was not exactly sure what Kaiser's position was with regard to the opposing ideas expressed in his play, considered the ending very conventional and dated. He was also dissatisfied by the poor scene in which Kehoe and two accomplices were able to escape, while all the other settlers were being arrested. Felix Hollaender (535), admiring Kaiser's intellectuality and his lack of compromise, considered the purity of his ideas more revolutionary than all the recent "Tendenzstücke". He was impressed by the high quality of *Mississippi* with its sharply drawn conflicts and its topical, logically developed problems. Still, the drama was hampered by the fact that the characters were not fully developed and that they were too



abstract and schematic.

Hans Hinrich's production was very successful, mainly because of the powerful second act and despite the anticlimactic third act. The slight dissent was drowned out by rousing applause (532). This was a clear production, the acting was generally good and the mass scenes were excellent (532, 533). Doris was played by Gerda Müller, making a comeback after a period of absence from the Berlin stage. Engel saw Hinrich's intense production, with Leonhard Steckel's unrestrained performance as Stimson, as slipping back into Expressionism. Felix Hollaender (536) complained that the production was too superficial; according to another critic (537), the intellectual content was overwhelmed by the strong theatrical effects. One hostile reviewer (538), disliking the play's improbable plot and Kaiser's mystical, unclear treatment of the 1928 flood, could no longer be amazed by the "reactionary" executive of the Volksbühne who were now presenting such "Zeitstücke". He concluded that, unfortunately, there was not enough dissent in opposition to the applause of the "Kleinbürger".

### *König Hahnrei*

*König Hahnrei*, a "Tragödie", is an early drama which, although first written in 1910 and published in 1913 (Berlin: S. Fischer), was not premiered until 1931. It has most in common with *Die jüdische Witwe* and *Der gerettete*





*Alkibiades*. As in these dramas, Kaiser reinterprets and de-idealises a traditional theme – this time, the Tristan legend. The drama is dominated by König Marke, a senile voyeur similar to Manasse. Kaiser, with his modern psychological perspective, does not present a romantic, mystical glorification of fidelity, love and death in the manner of Gottfried von Strassburg but a grotesque de-romanticisation of the legend. He emphasizes the difference in age between Marke and Isolde and makes other changes to Gottfried's *Tristan und Isolde*. Marke is aware of the love between Tristan and Isolde and of the Brangäne substitution which takes place every night. Indeed, he actually approves of Tristan and Isolde's relationship. As a perverted voyeur, he encourages them to be together, even arranging for Tristan to sleep in the royal bedroom. The major change from Gottfried is that, for Kaiser, love is not particularly powerful and Tristan and Isolde's love for each other is allowed to die. When they return from their banishment, they realise that Marke has destroyed their love by encouraging and allowing it. Marke kills them with a spear, because now that they no longer love each other, they are no use to him and cannot give him pleasure. The ending is especially grotesque – the lovers, whose love has faded, are physically united in death, Marke's spear passing through both bodies and pinning Tristan and Isolde together. In general, Kaiser has eliminated the implausible mediaeval features of Gottfried's *Tristan und Isolde*, e.g. there are no



dragons, there is no magic love potion and no ordeal. However, there is an element of mysticism in the figure of the Kabbalist, whose "Wunderspiegel" allows the past to be seen.

Like *Die jüdische Witwe* and *Der gerettete Alkibiades*, we have an atmospheric, full-scale, historical drama, with a massive cast, open form and epic breadth. Voyeurism and eroticism can also be found in *Die jüdische Witwe*. Kenworthy refers to the "neo-romantic mood" of *König Hahnrei*.<sup>139</sup>

Schürer writes:

The romantic settings of the play, its erotic atmosphere, the decadent narcissism of the king, his introspectiveness and self-delusion are neo-Romantic, but the language is terse and in parts already Expressionistic.<sup>140</sup>

Considering the uncomfortable Freudian undermining of a conventional sentimental theme and the fact that this drama, with its extreme "Telegrammstil", is difficult and problematic, it is easy to understand why it was so late being premiered.

When *König Hahnrei* was premiered at the Staatliches Schauspielhaus in Berlin on 5.5.1931, the only Kaiser premiere of the year, it was unsuccessful on account of Jürgen Fehling's inappropriate realistic-Naturalistic production. Also, the text itself was not considered of major importance. Ihering (539) considered the play a beginner's work which was only of literary-historical importance and of no general interest. Already one could see

---

<sup>139</sup>Kenworthy, p. 8.

<sup>140</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 55.





how intellectual values were changing as old symbols and figures had now become questionable. Moreover, the early influence of Freud on this psychoanalytical study of König Marke was apparent, e.g. the manner in which Marke transfers his jealousy of Tristan to Isolde's six-year old brother. Kurt Pinthus (540) felt that the play failed because of its fragmentary psychology, which frequently aroused the audience's laughter. Here, Kaiser had been influenced not only by the "Neuromantik" of Maeterlinck and Eulenberg but also by a desire for psychoanalytical depth. As well, there was already a tendency to sprinkle the tragic events with touches of irony. The critic for the *B. Z. am Mittag* (541) saw *König Hahnrei* as a romantic work, with its figures like Melot the dwarf and the Kabbalist. Several reviewers described the drama as merely a long monologue by Marke and the other characters as really nothing more than pantomime figures (539, 540, 542). Considering the fact that the Staatstheater was in a precarious position and was trying valiantly to win back the large number of spectators who had deserted it, Paul Fechter (542) could not understand why the decision had been made to resurrect a play which was uninteresting and lacked life even when it had first appeared. *König Hahnrei*, written before Kaiser had broken through to his own original style, was a lifeless, literary practice piece, a cheap reinterpretation of a traditional legend. For one critic (544), this metaphysically hazy, over-symbolical and over-psychological drama demonstrated





very clearly Kaiser's confusion and sterility. Another reviewer (545) did not see Kaiser's cause being served by the Staatstheater reviving one of his weakest early plays in such a monotonous production which only offered the spectator three hours of boredom.

Jürgen Fehling attempted to update *König Hahnrei* and to emphasize the atmosphere of its setting.<sup>141</sup> The production was described variously as being set in Mecklenburg around the turn of the twentieth century (539), in contemporary North Germany (540) and during the "Bürgerzeit" of the nineteenth century (542). Features anachronistic to Kaiser's original were also added. König Marke shot the lovers with a revolver; the scene in the "Rosengarten" was replaced by a scene in a hothouse; petrol lamps, newspapers and black leather sofas were all used as props. However, this production seemed a misinterpretation of Kaiser's drama to critics like Ihering and Pinthus. Ihering thought that it should have attempted to bring out the specifically Kaiser features of this early text, in particular the beginnings of the "Ideenbühne". Instead, Fehling presented Kaiser in a style more appropriate to his complete opposite, Ernst Barlach. Whereas Kaiser was fast-moving, light, abstract and ironic, Barlach was slow, ponderous, concrete and religious. For Barlach, the setting and countryside were important, for Kaiser the intellect. This production, which emphasized the setting while rendering Kaiser's language ineffective, was a

<sup>141</sup>There is a photograph of this production in Steffens, p. 136.



mistake. Indeed, Rochus Gliese's atmospheric stage designs had really nothing to do with Kaiser's original. For Ihering, the consequences of the false emphasis and aims of this type of production could be devastating. If this continued, the possibilities of intellectual theatre would be destroyed in favour of a nebulous evocation of mood. Pinthus felt that *König Hahnrei*, a "Kostümstück", which was partly lyrical, partly parodistic, partly analytical and partly heroic, could only be presented either as a literary-historical exercise showing the confusion of dramatic styles around 1910, or ironically. He agreed with Ihering that Fehling, instead, presented Kaiser in the style of his opposite Barlach. This director from Lübeck, who was usually very faithful to the original text, had for once made reckless cuts and changes. However, the play's weaknesses, which might have been disguised, to a certain extent, by a period presentation, were highlighted unfavourably by this performance in modern dress. He concluded that, all in all, this mistaken production, which made Kaiser's confused work even more confusing, was a lost cause and a failed attempt. For the critic from the *B.Z. am Mittag*, the Staatstheater was too endangered to risk such experiments. This depressing production distorted Kaiser's text too much and, in its lack of originality, was the product of "Geistlosigkeit".

The acting, which was just as depressing for one critic as Fehling's efforts (541), was unable to save the





production. Heinrich George appeared as a Naturalistic König Marke, wearing a Panama hat and a crumpled dinner jacket; Tristan looked like "ein grünlicher Schulamtskandidat" (540), like a thin, fair-haired "Pfarrkandidat" (541); Isolde was changed into a "Bürgersfrau", with her hair-style from the 1880's and her long white dress (541). The barons were described as "Krautjunker" (539), as a "bäuerliche Stammtischrunde" (540) and as "pommersche Inspektoren" (541). According to Ihering, George's false interpretation of his role was more appropriate to Barlach than to Kaiser. For Fechter, such a lifeless drama should not be presented seriously, but parodistically. A serious presentation of Marke in all his verbosity was unbearable and only made the figure unsympathetically comical. He thought that only a grotesque, humorous presentation of Marke was possible and that Ralph Arthur Roberts would have been better suited to the role than Heinrich George, who had been miscast. There was even the complaint that the North German setting was inconsistent – the Catholic priest and the cathedral, where Marke goes to confess, seemed out of place in this Protestant landscape (541). The audience's reaction was a mixture of applause, laughter and dissent (543). It was mainly through Heinrich George's efforts that the evening was saved from ending in a serious scandal and that the torturous nature of this failed, slow-moving production was somewhat alleviated (541, 543, 545).



## *Der Silbersee*

*Der Silbersee*, written in 1932 and published in 1933 (Berlin: Kiepenheuer), represented another collaboration with Kurt Weill, who composed the music. It has most in common with *Zwei Krawatten* in its mixture of revue and Expressionist features. There is a similar combination of unlikely events, which is further enhanced by the fact that this work is intended as a "Wintermärchen in drei Akten". We see Olim winning a lottery, a lake freezing in spring, wicked nobles and the contrasting worlds of thieves living rough in the woods and an aristocratic castle. Again, there is a mixture of drama, music and songs. Atmospheric sets and lighting effects also add to the mood.

The main Expressionist features are the moments of "Telegrammstil", the open form within an overall act structure, the topical social criticism and the theme of the "Neuer Mensch". This fairy-tale takes place during a period of hunger, poverty and unemployment similar to the early 1930's. Once more, Kaiser reveals the inconsistencies of the capitalist system. Although people are starving, surplus food is destroyed so that prices remain constant.<sup>142</sup> In contrast to *Die Lederköpfe*, Kaiser retreats from his support of mass revolution. Olim, realising that he cannot overcome universal hunger and that he lacks the strength to bring about a better social order, has only limited ambitions and dedicates himself to saving just one individual, Severin.<sup>143</sup>

---

<sup>142</sup>See Kaiser, *Der Silbersee*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, III, 202.

<sup>143</sup>Olim: "Da ich nicht alle hungrigen Mäuler stopfen kann





Olim, the "Landjäger", and Severin, the thief, are both changed towards each other; they are both "Neue Menschen". Olim, after winning the lottery, gives up his job in order to care for Severin, whom he shot while he was escaping; Severin overcomes his resentment towards Olim (the wound has left him with a limp) on account of Olim's great kindness. Basically, the drama is one of reconciliation. Class antagonism between the policeman and the thief is replaced by friendship. Social utopianism and revolution are rejected, as Kaiser urges man to help his fellow man on an individual basis. Although Olim is cheated out of his property by the evil aristocrats Frau von Luber and Baron Laur, although society at large has not been changed and although Olim and Severin, now destitute, intend to commit suicide by drowning in the "Silbersee", the ending is positive and optimistic. Miracles are possible as the lake freezes over in spring. Man has a duty towards life, he must make the effort to live on, it is too early to give up: "Wir sollen weiter gehen. [...] Wer weiter muss – den trägt der Silbersee!"<sup>144</sup> Kenworthy writes accurately:

Olim and Severin are unlike most of Kaiser's New Men, for they do not decline the responsibility of continuing to face life; they have discovered, as individuals, a new relationship – and they are not utterly disillusioned. They still owe a duty to each

-----  
<sup>143</sup>(cont'd)und niemals stark genug bin eine bessere Weltordnung durchzudrücken, so widme ich mich einem einzelnen, nach dem ich hier nicht lange zu suchen brauche. Mein Mann ist durch einen Schuss gekennzeichnet. Den würde ich zu mir einladen und als meinen Bruder mit mir leben lassen" (Kaiser, *Der Silbersee*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, III, 215).

<sup>144</sup>Kaiser, *Der Silbersee*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, III, 287.





other and to life.<sup>145</sup>

According to Huder, *Der Silbersee* was premiered in Leipzig and ten other German theatres.<sup>146</sup> However, I only have evidence of the premieres on 18.2.1933 at the Altes Theater, Leipzig, the Stadttheater, Erfurt and the Stadttheater, Magdeburg. Schürer writes of the Leipzig premiere:

When Kaiser's *Silbersee* was produced in the Leipzig Altes Theater on February 18, 1933, with Kaiser and Weill present for the occasion, stormtroopers interrupted the play. This scandal served as a pretext for prohibiting the production of all of Kaiser's plays inside Germany. Kaiser's slogan of love and peace was no longer acceptable to the purveyors of hate and war. His pacifism and individualism were anathema to the Nazis.<sup>147</sup>

Huder also reports that the Leipzig production resulted in a theatre scandal provoked by the Nazis.<sup>148</sup> However, Ihering's description of this opening-night was quite different. Ihering (547), a highly respected and usually reliable critic, who actually attended the Leipzig premiere, noted that the evening was "ein grosser Erfolg ohne Widerspruch".<sup>149</sup> None of the other reviews in my possession mentions a Nazi-inspired scandal in Leipzig. Also, in contrast to Schürer, another review (546)<sup>150</sup> reported that, although Weill was present, Kaiser himself, in accordance with his habit of not attending the performance of his own

-----  
<sup>145</sup>Kenworthy, p. 88.

<sup>146</sup>Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 869.

<sup>147</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 138.

<sup>148</sup>Kaiser, *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 854.

<sup>149</sup>Ihering's comments are confirmed by documents 555, 556 and 559 in the Magdeburg section.

<sup>150</sup>H. Ih. is presumably Herbert Ihering.



plays, had not appeared at this premiere.

Ihering (547) praised the provinces for having more courage than Berlin in staging *Der Silbersee*, after anticipated productions at the Volksbühne and the Deutsches Theater in Berlin had fallen through. He saw the play as a stimulating but peculiar, at times disturbing, mixture of fairy-tale, intellectual comedy and Wagnerian opera, of Brecht, Kaiser and Weill (546). Surprisingly, this cool playwright Kaiser was similar to Richard Wagner in the way that his rational drama gave way very easily to romantic mysticism. The ending, in particular, was not far removed from Wagner's "Erlöserdramatik". Again, a very trivial incident (the theft of a pineapple) had been used to motivate the intellectual plot. For Ihering, the real problem of Kaiser's writing was that, instead of poetic depth, he preferred to remain on the surface, leaving the spectator merely with wordplay or an undeveloped image (the "Silbersee") (547). Georg Witkowski (548) also considered *Der Silbersee* a strange mixture of styles in its combination of the noble, prophetic ideas of "Brüderlichkeit" and "Güte" from 1920 with songs in the manner of *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Zwei Krawatten*.

Detlef Sierck's tight, compressed production toned down the aggressive features of Kaiser's text, eliminating those songs which were too risqué politically and emphasizing the human aspects of the drama. In this way, the intellectually overladen work became somewhat clearer (549). Ihering was





amazed that the pleasantly light production emphasized the revue's comic features, especially considering the fact that Kaiser productions, particularly in the provinces, still tended to add elements of Expressionist style. He thought that Kaiser should write another comedy because this genre was suited to his abilities — his wordplay, his quickly-moving ideas and sprightly dialogue. Important for the production was Sierck's decision to cast a comic actor, Erhard Siedel, in the role of Olim. This excellent production, with its fine acting, received rousing applause (546, 547). The critic for the Berlin *Theater-Tageblatt* (550) felt that the main reason for the evening's success was Kurt Weill's music, which was performed by musicians from the Leipzig Symphony under Gustav Brecher. Ihering liked the opening scenes, where the music was not allowed to predominate, but was less satisfied by the operatic ending.

The Erfurt premiere of *Der Silbersee* at the Stadttheater, where Dr. Paul Legband was the "Intendant", achieved "einen freundlichen Achtungserfolg". Hermann Pfeiffer's excellent production was unable to bring out the work's meaning (551).

The critics at the Magdeburg premiere were fairly restrained in their assessment of Kaiser's revue. It was conceded that *Der Silbersee* demonstrated, at times, the author's technical ability and was intellectually stimulating (553, 554). Yet the overall effect was not one of a "Lehrstück", but of a "Leerstück" which was nearer to



the "Moritat" and crime films than to serious drama (553). The reviewer for the *Magdeburgische Zeitung* (553) felt cheated by the indecisive ending. After a clear development of the action, the spectator was left abruptly with an obscure, nebulous symbol (the "Silbersee") and it was not obvious whether the ending was intended optimistically or pessimistically. He also complained that the songs, with their dated social criticism and "Moritat" features, became boring and unbearable during the course of the evening. Weill's music was best in the instrumental interludes. Still, he was not sure whether *Der Silbersee* was supposed to be an opera with too much dialogue or a play with too much music. Günter Schab (554) also reached similar conclusions. He considered the first two acts understandable and tolerable but became bored with the symbol of the "Silbersee". He could not see why it had frozen in spring and found the mystical ending incomprehensible. Weill's music, which was best in the interludes, was unable to save Kaiser's text. The music, although reminiscent of the *Dreigroschenoper*, lacked the assurance and popular appeal of Weill's collaboration with Brecht.

Hellmuth Götze's production, in contrast to the Leipzig production, presented the revue like "ein politisches Tendenzstück". Slides were shown, the lights were turned on in the auditorium when a song was meant to address the spectators directly and a "Drehbühne" was used, although the scene-changes were still considered too slow (553, 554).





However, at times, the production's effects seemed overdone (553). The highpoint of the evening was the powerful acting of Ernst Busch from Berlin as Severin. The other actors were less satisfactory and had problems with the songs (552, 553). During the performance, there was a tense, icy atmosphere, there was some slight mocking laughter and a few people left in the interval (554). However, there were no serious incidents (552, 554). The tension died down in the course of the long, tiresome production; at the end of the evening, there was some applause, more for the production than for the text (553).

Paradoxically, it was in Kaiser's home town Magdeburg that *Der Silbersee* aroused the wrath of the Nazis. In a statement condemning the production, several local Nazi groups accused the Magdeburg Stadttheater of debasing art "zu einseitiger, undeutscher Propaganda bolschewistischer Theorien". The Nazis saw this play as advocating class conflict and violence and as an insult to the people of Magdeburg. They called on the theatre, which was funded by public monies, to cancel further performances of *Der Silbersee* and demanded that those responsible for this production be brought to account (555). Hellmuth Götze, the "Intendant" of the Stadttheater and the director of this production, who with the stage designer Ernst Rufer had also been responsible for the 1930 Oldenburg premiere of *Mississippi*, which had aroused Nazi protests as well, dismissed the objections of the Nazis (556). He argued that





*Der Silbersee* did not incite class antagonism but, in contrast, tried to reconcile class conflict and rejected violence. The revue had been produced, therefore, because of its ethical content, which aimed at harmonising social tensions. Indeed, numerous press reports had recognised this ethical content. He continued that there was also no evidence for the Nazi accusations that the Stadttheater had become, under his control, an organ for spreading Bolshevism and that its programme had become "undeutsch". In fact, the season had been dominated by the Classics and by the operas of Richard Wagner. Still, as a result of the protests, *Der Silbersee* was withdrawn from the subscription series. By now, it was too late to argue against the Nazis. In March, 1933, the new town administration in Magdeburg, under Nazi leadership, removed Götze from his position, arguing that the theatre had lost the respect of the local population by presenting plays like the "kommunistische Tendenz-Stück" *Der Silbersee* and *Die Braut von Torotzko*, which glorified the Jews (560).

The *Magdeburgische Zeitung* (555), which rejected Kaiser's drama on the whole, while acknowledging its artistic values and ethical ideas, attempted on 22.2.1933 to give their readers a clearer picture of the play by reprinting extracts from the reviews of the Leipzig production which appeared in Nationalist newspapers elsewhere. Hugenberg's Nationalist paper, the *Tag*, described *Der Silbersee* as a triumph of love over hatred, as "eine



ethisch erklärte Konstruktion"; the Nationalist *Berlin Börsenzeitung* concluded that Severin had undergone an ethical process of change and that, miraculously in this world of conflict, he had overcome his hatred through love; Hugenberg's *Berliner Nachtausgabe* and his *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, likewise, recognised Kaiser's ethical demands and his reconciliatory attitude towards the rich and the poor.<sup>15</sup> Finally, Fritz Mack, who reviewed the play positively in the Nationalist *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, thought that this "Zeitstück mit sozialem Ethos" lacked the tendentiousness and aggressiveness of *Die Dreigroschenoper*.

Just as the rightwing reaction towards *Mississippi* had been inconsistent, so too, as we have seen, was the rightwing response to *Der Silbersee* contradictory. Whereas the production in Magdeburg was controversial and the local Nazis rose up in protest, the Leipzig production was a great success and even the Nationalist papers recognised the positive aspects of Kaiser's text (555, 559). As the press reaction in Leipzig had been so favourable, the Mayor of Magdeburg, Götze and some members of the theatre committee went to see the production there (556). The probable reason for the contrasting reception is that Sierck's production, unlike Götze's, toned down the revue's tendentious elements and emphasized its ethical features (555).

-----  
<sup>15</sup> Alfred Hugenberg (1865-1951), a rightwing politician, belonged to the "Deutschnationale Volkspartei". He also owned several newspapers and magazines through which he attacked the Weimar Republic. He was a minister in Hitler's cabinet of 30.1.1933.





But, by now, the days of public debate were over. On 5.5.1933, Kaiser was expelled from the Prussian Academy of Arts; on 10.5.1933, the Nazis burned his books.

## Conclusion

From 1922-33, Georg Kaiser consolidated his position as Germany's leading contemporary playwright. With *Nebeneinander* and *Kolportage*, he completely conquered Berlin and established himself as the most talented dramatist of his day (340, 344). Kurt Pinthus (358), writing in 1929, considered *Kolportage* Kaiser's most performed and most successful play. Even Alfred Kerr (359) described it as his most enjoyable work! *Nebeneinander* was also widely produced and enjoyed considerable success, although for some critics it quickly became dated. By the year of his 50th birthday, 1928, Kaiser had become the most performed contemporary dramatist in Germany.<sup>152</sup>

The major surprise of this period was the success of Kaiser's comedies, particularly the early comedies and especially in Berlin. Nowadays, early comedies like *David und Goliath* and *Der mutige Seefahrer* tend to be dismissed as "only slight comedies".<sup>153</sup> Yet the comedies *Kolportage* (1924), *David und Goliath* (1924), *Margarine* (1925), *Der mutige Seefahrer* (1927) and *Papiermühle* (1927) were all successful in Berlin. In fact, they benefitted from a

---

<sup>152</sup>See Rühle, p. 867.

<sup>153</sup>Kenworthy, p. 106.



backlash effect. Traditionalist critics were pleased, after the avantgarde excesses of Expressionism, that Kaiser had presented with these comedies "normal", non-Expressionist, easily accessible works. Werner Deubel (351) was pleasantly surprised by *Kolportage* because it did not contain any hysterical Expressionist protagonists, because it was not contorted in the Expressionist style. Mysing (300) attributed part of the success of *David und Goliath* to the fact that it was not a typical Kaiser play and did not use "Telegrammstil". Friedrich Kummer (380) praised *Der mutige Seefahrer* since it lacked the obscure symbolism, the mocking irony, the contrived dialogue and intellectualism of the Expressionist works. Instead, he liked the comedy because it was a product of the heart, because it was cheerful and had been born out of compassion for mankind. In the light of this fine early comedy, Johannes Reichelt (374) even wondered whether Kaiser had made a mistake in becoming a "Denkspieler" and had, thus, taken a wrong direction in his subsequent dramas.

Perhaps Ihering's description of Kaiser's comedies as his "echtesten Bühnenstücke" should not be ignored (392). He felt that Kaiser had been unfortunate in that the critics had concentrated on his Expressionist dramas, while treating his comedies as minor works (392). He also thought that Kaiser's talents as a writer were best suited to comedy (547). Perhaps these comments should be heeded and modern critics should reassess Kaiser's comedies. In particular,



*David und Goliath* deserves to be recognised as one of his most accomplished comedies and should not be dismissed as "only a slight comedy". Still, *Papiermühle* must be rejected as a trivial work and *Kolportage* seems to have been overrated by Kaiser's contemporaries.

The other surprising success was *Oktoberfest*, especially considering its similarity to *Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, which both suffered hostile reactions from contemporary critics.<sup>154</sup> Yet *Oktoberfest* was at least able to arouse the moral indignation of the critics and spectators in Gelsenkirchen. Although *Die Lederköpfe* and *König Hahnrei* were failures and made little impact, they are both major works in Kaiser's "oeuvre" and deserve to have been explored more fully by the theatres of his day.

One of the main problems for modern critics with regard to this period 1922-33 is the problem of categorisation. When did Kaiser leave Expressionism behind? When did his post-Expressionist period begin? Modern critics still reach opposing conclusions as to which of these later works should be considered Expressionist. For Schürer, *Gilles und Jeanne* and *Nebeneinander* are "Kaiser's last original Expressionist plays"; for Kenworthy, *Gilles und Jeanne* is "one of Kaiser's most expressionistic dramas" and *Gats* is an "Erneuerungs-drama". However, for Steffens, *Gilles und Jeanne* and *Gats* "haben mit 'Expressionismus' nichts mehr zu tun" and *Nebeneinander* is an example of "Neue Sachlichkeit".

---

<sup>154</sup>See Rühle, p. 868.





Unfortunately, Kaiser's contemporaries were just as confused and offer few new insights in this respect. Because of Kaiser's breakthrough as an Expressionist and because Kaiser had, therefore, been labelled an "Expressionist", there was a tendency to approach his new, later dramas from the perspective of his earlier Expressionist dramas, e.g. *Kanzlist Krehler*, which, apart from its language, is basically conventional, was seen in the context of grotesque Expressionism on account of the psychological implausibilities of its plot (288) and *Nebeneinander* was considered an example of tasteless, grotesque Expressionism (328). Other critics also saw *Nebeneinander* as a mixture of Expressionist and Naturalist elements<sup>155</sup> and as an example of "Neue Sachlichkeit" (339). In fact, Kaiser's contemporaries were confused about the style of his later dramas not only because of their difficulties with Expressionist style, but also because of *Kolportage*. This parody of trivial literature caused problems since contemporary critics now started to see parody even in plays not intended ironically. *Zwei Krawatten*, a sentimental revue, was described as a (failed) parody of the revue (358, 359, 363). Likewise, *Hellseherei* was seen as a "Parodie der kitschigen Gesellschaftsstücke" (493). However, the director at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus, Franz Everth, was not as perceptive as his critics and "misunderstood" the play in presenting it seriously, with only slight irony (493, 496)!

---

<sup>155</sup>Otto Schabbel, n.d., n.s., GKC.



## E. Premieres in Exile: 1933-45

Although his plays were banned in Germany, Kaiser still continued to produce new works at a prolific rate during the Nazi period. Indeed, from 1933-45 he wrote nineteen dramas. Refusing offers from the Ministry of Propaganda to work for the Nazis, he remained in Germany until June 1938, when he escaped to Holland and then to Switzerland (August 1938). In Switzerland, he frequently changed address and had to suffer financial hardship.

Schürer divides Kaiser's production from 1933 into three periods:

Chronologisch lassen sich die zwölf Jahre auch in drei Perioden unterteilen: Die fünf Jahre der inneren Emigration 1933-38 in Grünheide sind gekennzeichnet durch Stücke, deren Helden die oft beschworene 'Flucht aus der Wirklichkeit' antreten und sich in einem utopischen Reich der Ideen und Ideale vor der Kälte der Welt zu schützen suchen. [...] In den ersten fünf Jahren des Exils in der Schweiz von 1938 bis 1943 zeigt sich Kaisers soziales und politisches Engagement, das sich besonders in seinen Antikriegsstücken ausdrückt. [...] Im Gegensatz zu dem Optimismus des mittleren Zeitabschnitts werden die letzten Jahre der Emigration durch einen wachsenden Pessimismus verdüstert. [...] Die Anklage des Dichters richtet sich jetzt nicht mehr gegen seine politischen Feinde oder gegen ein bestimmtes System, sondern gegen die Menschheit an sich und gegen die ganze verfehlte Geschichte des Abendlandes.'

The first period, the period of inner exile, is dominated by new "Frauenstücke" in the style of the earlier

-----  
'Ernst Schürer, "Verinnerlichung, Protest und Resignation. Georg Kaisers Exil", in *Die deutsche Exilliteratur 1933-45*, ed. Manfred Durzak (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1973), pp. 278-79.





*Das Frauenopfer* and *Der Brand im Opernhaus* – *Adrienne Ambrossat*, *Agnete*, *Rosamunde Floris*, *Alain und Elise* and *Der Gärtner von Toulouse*.<sup>2</sup> In these "Frauenstücke" there is a tendency towards extreme subjectivity and withdrawal into an inner world of illusion. On escaping into exile, Kaiser's themes became broader and he now portrayed Nazi Germany in his dramas *Klawitter* and *Der englische Sender*. His subject-matter became more topical as he treated the problems of militarism, war and peace in plays like *Der Soldat Tanaka*, *Napoleon in New Orleans*, *Das Floss der Medusa* and *Die Spieldose*. From 1943–44 he wrote his last works, *Zweimal Amphitryon*, *Pygmalion* and *Bellerophon*, the three "Griechische Dramen" which have Classical form and are written in verse. The last two plays deal with the problem of the artist in an hostile world. With his "Schwanengesang" *Bellerophon*, Kaiser considered his life's work complete.<sup>3</sup>

While still in Nazi Germany, Kaiser asked Gustaf Gründgens, the director of the Berlin Staatliches Schauspielhaus, to produce his comedy *Das Los des Ossian Balvesen* under a pseudonym, although to no avail.<sup>4</sup> His only recourse now was to have his dramas premiered in those German-speaking countries still not occupied by the Nazis. Of nineteen plays written during the Nazi period, six were premiered outside Germany, "in exile" – two in Austria even before Kaiser himself went into exile and four in

<sup>2</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, pp. 143–49.

<sup>3</sup>Kaiser, letter to Caesar von Arx, 2.4.1944, in *Briefe*, pp. 983–84.

<sup>4</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, pp. 183–84 and p. 243, note 41.



Switzerland.

*Adrienne Ambrossat* and *Das Los des Ossian Balvesen* were both premiered in Vienna. Ernst Deutsch, who had appeared in the first Berlin production of *Die Koralle*, starred with Paula Wessely in *Adrienne Ambrossat* at the Theater in der Josefstadt (5.2.1935). The director Röbbeling, who had produced earlier the Hamburg premiere of *Zweimal Oliver*, staged *Das Los des Ossian Balvesen* at the Burgtheater on 26.11.1936.

The first version of *Adrienne Ambrossat*, a "Schauspiel in drei Akten", was written in 1934-35 and was translated into English in 1935. Kaiser's play represents a more complicated reworking of Maupassant's story *La Parure*. As a "Frauenstück", it has a female protagonist, a French setting (Paris around 1900) and the theme of female self-sacrifice, although it lacks closed form. Schürer notes correctly the similarities to the earlier *Hellseherei* – the ambitious husband, the preoccupation with dresses and jewellery, the theme of adultery and the final reconciliation between husband and wife.<sup>5</sup> Kenworthy felt that *Adrienne Ambrossat* was "original neither in its diction nor its construction, nor even in its conception".<sup>6</sup>

For René Kraus (562), this embarrassing late work threatened to diminish Kaiser's reputation as a dramatist. He thought that the contrived plot was made unbearable by Kaiser's dialogue, which was dated and only sounded stupid

---

<sup>5</sup>See Schürer, *Kaiser*, pp. 145-46.

<sup>6</sup>Kenworthy, p. 121.





now. Although he found the action over-complex to the point of monotony, Moriz Scheyer (563) was consoled by Kaiser's belief in women and in the power of love. According to Kraus, the probable reason for the production was to provide Paula Wessely with a suitable vehicle for her talents. Indeed, this fine actress celebrated a well-deserved personal triumph as Adrienne and was well applauded (562, 563). There were differing reactions from the two critics towards the rest of Otto Preminger's production, which also starred Dagny Servaes, the daughter of the Berlin critic Franz Servaes, as Helene. For Scheyer, the entire production, with its period sets, was marvellous. Kraus complained that this two and a half hour long performance could have been produced more conscientiously and that cuts were needed in the frequent repetition of plot details. He was disappointed by Ernst Deutsch's performance as Paul and was afraid that the spectators would not flock to see Kaiser's play.

Like *Adrienne Ambrossat*, *Das Los des Ossian Balvesen*, which was written in 1934, does not break any new ground, either stylistically or thematically. Rather than endanger himself by confronting the new Nazi reality in Germany, Kaiser preferred, during his period of inner exile, to rework old themes and techniques. This "Komödie in fünf Akten" is another Scandinavian comedy and is indebted to early comedies like *David und Goliath* and *Der mutige Seefahrer*. Again, familiar themes and features return – the





winning lottery ticket, the power of money, the sudden acquisition of wealth, the provincial, petty-bourgeois environment. Like Axel in *David und Goliath*, Sven does not wish to marry a rich daughter. Just as the Kassierer (*Von morgens bis mitternachts*), Oliver (*Zweimal Oliver*) and Jean (*Zwei Krawatten*) had realised that money cannot buy happiness, so too does Ossian come to reject wealth. However, whereas the Kassierer and Oliver had yielded to suicide and madness, Ossian, like Jean, learns to appreciate the simple pleasures of life. Ultimately, he is quite content to remain within the confines of his petty-bourgeois world.<sup>7</sup> Schürer writes of this "vollkommen unpolitische Stück":<sup>8</sup>

Kaiser wrote it in 1934, using tried subject matter and the Naturalistic style. With its ethos of limitation and renunciation, the play shows Kaiser's retreat from Expressionism to a more objective world.<sup>9</sup>

The comedy's plot, in particular Ossian's rejection of extreme wealth, did not convince the critics in Vienna. Felix Salten (565), who found *Das Los des Ossian Balvesen* harmless and tame compared to Kaiser's earlier treatment of the same theme in plays like *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, could not really understand why Ossian tore up the lottery

-----  
<sup>7</sup>Kenworthy remarks: "Like Jean in *Zwei Krawatten*, Ossian is able to compromise: the lottery of life had led them both into the temptations of sudden and fortuitous wealth, and they were disillusioned. Yet their demands on life are no longer absolute, as were those of the Clerk and Krehler, so that they do not reject life itself when it disappoints them, but rather accept its limitations" (p. 91).

<sup>8</sup>Schürer, "Georg Kaisers Exil", in Durzak, p. 265.

<sup>9</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 42.



ticket. Rudolf Lothar (564) described Ossian's behaviour at the end as unbounded stupidity. Even Ernst Decsey (566), who praised the very poetic and humorous figure of Glynn, the touching scene with the lamp and the sentimental ending, could not accept Ossian's foolish behaviour in destroying the ticket. Still, despite this behaviour and the unnecessary fourth act, he considered this a drama of high quality. Röbbeling's production and the excellent cast filled Kaiser's text with life. The minor parts were presented as lively types and Ewald Balser was almost believable as Ossian (564, 566). The public response was favourable (564).

In exile in Switzerland, Kaiser could now write more openly and could address important social issues. *Der Soldat Tanaka*, a "Schauspiel in drei Akten", was written in 1939-40 and published in 1940 (Zürich: Oprecht). Set in Japan during the 1920's, it shows how a model, obedient soldier, Tanaka, comes to see the injustices of the militaristic, feudal society in which he lives. A "Neuer Mensch", he questions a system which forces the starving peasants to sell their daughters to brothels in order to pay for the upkeep of the Emperor's soldiers. Once more, common humanity is affirmed; Tanaka, the "Mensch", is far superior to the Emperor. With unusual simplicity, Kaiser presents a powerful tragedy. He described the play himself as an attack on militarism and compared it to Büchner's *Woyzeck*:

Der Soldat Tanaka erhebt eine Fackel der Anklage –  
wogegen? Gegen alles, was heute geschieht – was





gegenwärtig bewundert und verzärtelt wird. Gegen die uniformierte Feigheit – gegen den Absturz in die Soldaterei. Dies ist der erste Grad menschlicher Entwürdigung. Was ich in *Villa Aurea* schrieb sind nur schwache Klänge – der Soldat Tanaka spricht mit einer Deutlichkeit, die die Einfalt der Grösse hat. Es ist vollendeter Woyzeck – es ist mehr als Woyzeck.<sup>10</sup>

For Schürer, *Der Soldat Tanaka and Napoleon in New Orleans* represented Kaiser's "best pacifist plays during the emigration".<sup>11</sup>

Considering Kaiser's low opinion of the Swiss theatres, it is somewhat surprising that he allowed four of his dramas to be premiered there, two in Zürich and two in Basle.<sup>12</sup> *Der Soldat Tanaka* was premiered on 2.11.1940 at the Zürich Schauspielhaus, where Brecht's *Mutter Courage, Das Leben des Galilei* and *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* were also premiered.

<sup>10</sup>Kaiser, letter to Caesar von Arx, 9.12.1939, in *Briefe*, pp. 488–89. However, Ian C. Loram was not convinced by Kaiser's comparison: "Kaiser's only real claim to 'vollendeter Woyzeck' would appear to be his third act, the court-martial scene, and here the obvious manner in which he preaches at us simply does not make an impression. [...] Tanaka is in many respects too much like Woyzeck to play the part convincingly of the worm that turns. It is asking too much of us to demand that we accept the Tanaka of Act III as a logical development of the Tanaka of Act I, no matter how noble the sentiments of Act III may be. The change in Tanaka is as unconvincing as a similar change in Woyzeck would have been. We can be grateful that Büchner left Woyzeck as he was" ("Georg Kaiser's *Der Soldat Tanaka*. 'Vollendeter Woyzeck'?" *German Life and Letters*, 10, 1956, 47–48).

<sup>11</sup>Schürer, *Kaiser*, p. 166.

<sup>12</sup>After the Basle premiere of *Die Spieldose*, Kaiser wrote of the Swiss theatres: "Die Theater hier entsprechen mittleren deutschen Provinzbühnen, die der kultivierte Mensch mit einem weiten Umweg meidet. Mir haben Aufführungen im Zürcher Schauspielhaus stets körperliches Unbehagen bereitet. Ich habe immer nur gezwungen diese Stätte der entstellenden Kunst betreten. Ihre Schauspieler sind keine Darsteller sondern Entsteller. Von den Bühnen in Basel und Bern will ich schweigen. Ein gütiges Geschick hat mich bisher vor dem Betreten dieser Lokale bewahrt" (letter to Frida Haller, Oct. 1943, in *Briefe*, p. 924).



Although Kaiser's plays had never been really popular in Switzerland, the Zürich Schauspielhaus was praised for producing such a moving play as *Der Soldat Tanaka*, with its relentless logic and skilful structure (568). The critic for the *Volksrecht* thought that this logical, stimulating play deserved the respect and gratitude of thinking workers.<sup>13</sup> He liked this clear, social-revolutionary and high-quality "Gesinnungsstück" which exposed, with great simplicity, the workings of the capitalist economic system. Moreover, Tanaka's forceful, explosive attack in the splendid third act was reminiscent of great revolutionary speakers like Thomas Münzer and Robespierre (570). The Swiss critic Bernhard Diebold, who had reviewed so many of Kaiser's plays while working in Frankfurt/M., had, like Kaiser, left Nazi Germany for Switzerland. He still considered Kaiser a "Denkspieler" and felt that a play by Kaiser was best described as a "Hörspiel" because Kaiser's language was all-important (567). He described *Der Soldat Tanaka* as a crystal-clear "Denkaufgabe" in three acts, which presented universal problems, despite its oriental setting. In particular, Tanaka's silence during the court scene was a masterpiece of dramatic effectiveness. For the critic from the *Neue Zürcher Nachrichten* (569), this was not a pleasant evening's entertainment on account of the work's bitterness, which was unredeemed by any elements of hope. Still, he was favourable towards its fine structure. Kissel (571), who was

-----  
<sup>13</sup>-tt., *Volksrecht*, 2.11.1940.





pleasantly surprised by Kaiser's intensification of the action in the last two acts, thought that the play was effective because of its powerful ideas and its demands for truth and freedom.

Franz Schnyder's accomplished production was a great success and received jubilant applause, which increased from act to act, from the large audience (568, 571, 572). Karl Paryla as Tanaka dominated the production, filling his part with life. His silence during the court scene was especially effective. In comparison, the other actors only had minor roles (569). Robert Furrer's Japanese sets used strong colours but were simple rather than exotic (571). For Diebold, these tasteful sets were too realistic instead of symbolical. He also complained that the production, with its many drawn-out pauses, practically ignored Kaiser's incisive dialectics and that it lacked the required style for a "Denkspiel". Although he felt that it did not do full justice to the text, the critic for the *Volksrecht* (570) confirmed that the production left a deep impression.

Rather ironically, Kaiser, who had had to suffer many problems with the censors during the First World War and the early years of the Weimar Republic and who had left Nazi Germany to escape the ban on his works, was now the victim of censorship in Switzerland. The Swiss government, anxious to preserve its neutrality, responded to protests from the Japanese embassy in Switzerland and further performances of Kaiser's pacifist drama at the Zürich Schauspielhaus were





cancelled.<sup>14</sup> Still, the Zürich Schauspielhaus was allowed to produce *Der Soldat Tanaka* as a "Gastspiel" in Schaffhausen and Winterthur. In both towns, the play was greeted by loud applause.<sup>15</sup>

After a three-year interval, *Die Spieldose* was the next of Kaiser's dramas to be premiered in Switzerland, this time at the Basle Stadttheater (12.10.1943). This "Schauspiel in fünf Akten", written in 1943 and translated into English in 1944, is a mixture of psychological and Expressionist drama. With its French setting (Brittany during the Second World War), small cast, female protagonist and psychological problems, it is close to the "Frauenstücke". After Paul has been reported killed on the Maginot line, Paul's fiancée, Noelle, and his father, Pierre, can only adjust psychologically to this new reality by turning to each other and marrying. With the birth of a child, the past seems to have been overcome. When Paul returns and confesses that he has killed Pierre, Noelle can no longer adapt mentally to this changed reality.<sup>16</sup> Whereas earlier she had been able to make a psychological adjustment, now she is horrified and only wants to escape with her baby from Paul. Rejected, Paul undergoes a transformation and seeks to atone for the murder of his father by confessing to the murder of an occupying soldier (which he did not commit) in order to save ten

-----  
<sup>14</sup>See Schürer, "Georg Kaisers Exil," in Durzak, p. 274.

<sup>15</sup>anon., *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Schaffhausen), 30.11.1940 and k., *Neues Winterthurer Tagblatt*, No. 300, n.d., GKC.

<sup>16</sup>The theme of the return of a "dead" lover can also be found in *Juana* and *Der mutige Seefahrer*.



innocent hostages. A "Neuer Mensch", he thinks that the past needs to be forgotten and that the earth has been betrayed through war and bloodshed. Still, Noelle's child represents the hope of a better future. In *Die Spieldose*, Kaiser presents the chaos and disintegration of a world at war. Whereas the characters of Kaiser's "Frauenstücke" had been able to withdraw mentally from cruel reality into an ideal inner world, now, during the Second World War, such escapism is no longer possible and, in the last resort, "Schein" cannot ignore "Sein". Noelle's unwillingness to forget Paul's murder of his father forces him to act in a socially responsible manner.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, this extremely contrived drama is not terribly convincing.

*Die Spieldose* was performed only once, before a small audience in Basle, where the production was hampered by the fact that Basle did not possess a suitable theatre for "Kammerspiele". There were complaints that the room lacked atmosphere and was too small (573, 574, 575). Yet Kaiser's drama was considered worth performing (573, 574). Although he did not find all aspects of the plot equally convincing psychologically, the critic for the Basle *National-Zeitung* (574) thought that Kaiser's play was effective on account of the intellectual intensity of its dialogue. Also, with its

-----  
<sup>17</sup>Kenworthy writes: "Thus the attempt to build up an inner world as a compensation for the brutality of the external world, and to evade responsibility, is replaced at the end of the play by thoughts of the regeneration of man. However man may seek to avoid responsibility and duty, he will neglect at his peril this paramount task of making himself 'worthy of the earth'" (p. 144).





fine intensification of the action, this was a gripping drama. For the critic from the *Basler Nachrichten* (573), *Die Spieldose* was excellently constructed and was not uninteresting. However, the reviewer for the local *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (575) described the play as a cold "Denkspiel" with characters who were not real human beings. Despite the poor attendance, there was good applause for Robert Trösch's simple production (575). Still, Trösch seemed to lack assurance and the production did not seem tight enough (573, 574). Friedl Wald as Noelle was full of life, warm-blooded and immediate (573, 574). However, Ulrich Marti's Paul was problematic and stylistically inconsistent. With his exaggerated behaviour and unclear diction, his character was unconvincing, especially the transformation (573, 574, 575).

The following year, *Zweimal Amphitryon* was premiered at the Zürich Schauspielhaus (29.4.1944). The first of Kaiser's "Griechische Dramen", it was written in 1943. This Classical play is written in verse and has a five-act structure.<sup>18</sup> Kaiser, eliminating the farcical aspects of the *Amphitryon* story (e.g. the Sosias/Charis/Mercury subplot), presents instead a serious pacifist version with contemporary overtones. Zeus is now a well-intentioned, sympathetic figure and *Amphitryon* an unpleasant, destructive warmonger. Despite its form, this drama represents a modern attack on

---

<sup>18</sup>Schürer writes: "Stylistically, the retreat of the Expressionist had ended in the safe haven of traditional forms, but Kaiser's message remains the same: the play [...] is his final protest against militarism" (*Kaiser*, p. 170).



militarism and a renewed affirmation by Kaiser of pacifism and pure humanity. The gods, angered by the wars of mankind, are only prevented from destroying the human race by Alkmene's pure humanity. Her humble desire to possess Amphitryon not as a great warrior, but as an ordinary "Mensch", reveals an element of basic goodness in the human race. As in *Gas I* and *Die Spieldose*, a child symbolises the hope of a better future. Alkmene will give birth to Herakles, who will clean up the earth. Once more, as in *Europa*, vitality is affirmed but, this time, through the creation of the Olympic Games, warriors will be able to test their strength peacefully.<sup>19</sup>

There were mixed reactions from the Zürich critics towards Kaiser's "Kriegsführerdrama" which was considered very topical (579). Indeed, Zeus's final speech was taken as an expression of Kaiser's own pacifist views amidst the horror of the Second World War (576). The reviewer for the *Volksrecht* (578), who was impressed by Kaiser's skills as a dramatist in presenting his universal themes so accessibly and atmospherically, praised this logical, poetic, visionary work. Despite his dissatisfaction with aspects of Leopold Lindtberg's production, Bernhard Diebold (576) was pleased that the Schauspielhaus had staged Kaiser's high-quality

-----  
<sup>19</sup> Zeus: "Danach ruft er [Herakles] zum Kampf – ruft nach Olympia./ Es soll die Lust am Kräftespiel nicht weichen./ Doch Kraft kämpft wider Kraft. Nicht List mit List./ Der unversehrte Leib sei das Gebot,/ dem sich die neuen Kämpfer willig fügen./ Denn Kraft soll wachsen und nicht untergehn./ So sind die Spiele von Olympia/ des Weges neues Ziel! – –"  
 (Kaiser, *Zweimal Amphitryon*, in *Werke*, ed. Huder, VI, 512).





work. However, there were complaints that *Zweimal Amphitryon* was not as powerful as the author's earlier plays and that the action was thin and drawn-out (577, 580, 581). Kaiser, who had been unable to present his ideas effectively, only offered a cool, contrived work (580). The critic for the *St. Galler Tagblatt* (581), sceptical of Zeus's deceit and trickery in defeating Amphitryon, wondered whether these means could banish war. Likewise, the critic for the *N. Z. Z.* (579) considered Zeus's trickery the play's weak point. There was long-lasting, loud applause for Lindtberg's production, which seemed appropriate to and worthy of Kaiser's text (578, 579). Diebold, however, was less satisfied. Describing *Zweimal Amphitryon* as a difficult work to produce, he felt that the production had really failed to present the required "Dämmerzustand" between "Sein" und "Schein". He complained that the production was too realistic and that Lukas Ammann (Amphitryon) and Wolfgang Langhoff (Zeus) had been miscast.

The last of Kaiser's plays to be premiered during his lifetime was *Das Floss der Medusa*. Written from 1940-43, it again deals with the problem of war. However, whereas children had offered some hope of a better future in *Gas I*, *Die Spieldose* and *Zweimal Amphitryon*, now Kaiser's vision is far bleaker. Apart from Allan, the children in the lifeboat are no better than adults. Corrupted by religious superstition, they too, like the adults engaged in a bloody war, are capable of murder, as they "sacrifice" one of their





number, Fückslein, because there are thirteen survivors in the same boat. The only slight element of hope is offered by the figure of Allan, the "Neuer Mensch", who, repulsed by the behaviour of his fellow survivors, brings about his own death rather than be saved. Kenworthy writes:

yet even in *Das Floss der Medusa* the possibility of a brighter future is not entirely excluded. One boy, like Kaiser himself, had seen 'der Menschheit auf den nackten Nabel' – and he chooses rather to die than to live among men after what he had seen: but his very rejection of a brutal world retains its ideal value.<sup>20</sup>

The play's form (a "Vorspiel", seven "Bilder" and a "Nachspiel"), the "crucifixion" scene, the anonymous characters (apart from the three main characters) and the themes owe much to Expressionism.

Kaiser allowed *Das Floss der Medusa* to be premiered at the Basle Stadttheater (24.2.1945) in order to raise money for war refugees. Because of his interest in the production, he also made an exception from his usual behaviour of not attending the premieres of his plays.<sup>21</sup> Still, this was no easy play to produce, since its themes and ideas were those of the adult world, yet the characters were nearly all

-----  
<sup>20</sup>Kenworthy, p. 98. Schürer interprets the ending more pessimistically: "It seems that, like Christ, he [Allan] has sacrificed himself for the sins of the world, which, however, will never be redeemed. God, creating the world, looked at it after seven days and found it to his liking; Allan, after seven days in the boat – a microcosm of society on the sea of life – knows that it is thoroughly evil, so evil, in fact, that he prefers dying to living in this world. He is the tragically impotent humanist who is totally defeated and can no longer function. Ann is the Antichrist; she uses the forces of religious superstition for her evil purposes" (*Kaiser*, p. 169).

<sup>21</sup>anon., *Basler Nachrichten*, n.d., GKC.



children. Instead of professional actors, Robert Pirk, the director, decided to use a specially created ensemble of Basle schoolchildren. Unfortunately, this production, which was performed twice in Basle (on a Saturday afternoon and then on one evening) and which was also performed at the Zürich Schauspielhaus, aroused little interest in Basle (585). The critic for the local *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (584) was not surprised by the poor attendance at the premiere, considering the problematic nature of Kaiser's play and the fact that it was performed on a Saturday afternoon. Still, there was praise for the disciplined acting of the schoolchildren who had never appeared on stage before (582, 583, 585). For one critic (582), Kaiser's topical, moral drama offered, through the figure of Allan, an element of hope; for another critic (583), this was a deeply pessimistic work.

With the defeat of fascism in 1945, the German theatres turned again to those dramatists like Kaiser who had been banned by the Nazis. Twelve of his plays were premiered after his death on 4.6.1945, mainly by West German provincial theatres, although there was one (student) premiere in Berlin and two premieres in East Germany.<sup>2 2</sup>

-----  
<sup>2 2</sup>These were: *Der Gärtner von Toulouse* (22.12.1945); *Der englische Sender* (as an "Hörspiel", 16.11.1947); *Klawitter* (19.9.1949); *Der Schuss in die Öffentlichkeit* (10.12.1949); *Agnete* (16.12.1949); *Napoleon in New Orleans* (28.1.1950); *Rosamunde Floris* (6.2.1953); *Pygmalion* (16.12.1953); *Bellerophon* (21.11.1953); *Alain und Elise* (1.9.1954), *Schellenkönig* (1.2.1958) and *Das gordische Ei* (21.11.1958).





According to Leroy R. Shaw, over 140 performances of 33 of Kaiser's plays took place from 1945–60.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, there was a renewed interest in Kaiser not only in West Germany but also in Austria, Switzerland and East Germany, where fourteen of his plays were staged during this period. The most frequently performed dramas were *Kolportage*, *Napoleon in New Orleans*, *Der Soldat Tanaka*, *Der Gärtner von Toulouse* and *Der mutige Seefahrer*. The major Expressionist plays *Die Bürger von Calais*, *Gas* and *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, although revived, were not performed to the same extent. Perhaps, not surprisingly, the post-war theatres neglected more radical Expressionist dramas like *Hölle Weg Erde* and demanding, problematic works like *Der gerettete Alkibiades*, *Die jüdische Witwe* and *König Hahnrei*.<sup>24</sup> Worth mentioning are Erwin Piscator's revivals of *Gas* at the Bochum Schauspielhaus (28.9.1958) and *Nebeneinander* at the Hamburg Thalia-Theater (4.5.1959). Merging *Gas I* and *II* into a five-act, two and a half hour production, the "brennende Aktualität"<sup>25</sup> of this *Gas* production could not be ignored in the new atomic age after the bombing of Hiroshima. For

-----  
<sup>23</sup>The information in this section is based on Shaw's article "Georg Kaiser auf der deutschsprachigen Bühne 1945–1960" and reviews in the GKC.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Silvia Konecny who writes of *König Hahnrei*: "Heute zählt das Drama sehr zu Unrecht zu den vergessenen Werken Georg Kaisers" ("*Georg Kaisers König Hahnrei*," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 97, 1978, 259).

<sup>25</sup>Gerd Vielhaber, *Kölner Stadtanzeiger*, 7.10.1958. Friedhelm Baukloh wrote: "Den kleinen Gedankensprung, statt 'Gas' 'Atomkraft' zu meinen, tat jeder Zuschauer automatisch. Und so schien dieses 1918 prophetische Stück ein Zeitstück für die Diskussionen von 1958 zu sein [...]" (*Echo der Zeit*, Recklinghausen, 16.11.1958).



Piscator's staging of *Nebeneinander*, Fritz Brauer created a "Simultanbühne", with three different settings on the stage at the same time.<sup>26</sup>

Of the twelve posthumous premieres from 1945–60, eight did not last longer than a single production. Just as Ihering (392, 547) had considered Kaiser's comedies his best stageplays and Kaiser's talents best suited to comedy, Shaw recognised the importance of the comedies for Kaiser's lasting reputation: "Die besten Chancen für Kaisers Verbleib im Repertoire dürften wohl auf dem Gebiet der Komödie liegen."<sup>27</sup> He concluded that there had not been a "Kaiser-Renaissance".<sup>28</sup> Likewise, Manfred Durzak reached a similar conclusion:

Selbst in den fünfziger Jahren, als sich erste Anzeichen für eine allmähliche Rückkehr seines Werks auf die deutschen Bühnen zeigten [...], setzte keineswegs eine weitreichende Kaiser-Renaissance ein, sondern es blieb bei vereinzelt Wiederaufführungsversuchen. Die Entwicklung, die die Wirkung seines Werks in den sechziger Jahren genommen hat, führte sogar noch zu einer Abschwächung dieser Rezeption. Teilt Kaiser das Schicksal vieler expressionistischer Autoren, die sich gerade durch die postulierte Zeitlosigkeit der ethischen Botschaft in ihrem Werk ihrer Zeit verhaftet und damit als historisch überholt erweisen?<sup>29</sup>

By the end of the 1960's, the Kaiser revival had waned considerably. Steffens writes in 1969: "Neben *Kolportage* wird fast nur noch *Napoleon* heute – mit unterschiedlichem Erfolg aufgrund der ästhetischen Schwierigkeiten des Stücks

-----  
<sup>26</sup> HA, *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 5.5.1959.

<sup>27</sup> Shaw, p. 78.

<sup>28</sup> Shaw, p. 80.

<sup>29</sup> Durzak, *Das expressionistische Drama*, I, 109.



- gespielt."<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup>Steffens, p. 128.





## F. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary to return to a theme which has run through the major commentary chapters: to what extent did the political attitudes of contemporary critics influence their views of Kaiser's plays? From a modern perspective, there is a certain temptation to assume that a writer like Kaiser, who had been banned by the Nazis and who had written such anti-militaristic dramas as *Die Bürger von Calais*, *Die Lederköpfe* and *Der Soldat Tanaka*, was universally condemned by the rightwing press and was embraced by leftwing publications. Unfortunately, the historical situation was not quite as simple.

It is true that the Catholic magazine *Hochland* denounced *Die Bürger von Calais* as "eine unheilbar moderne Dichtung" (6), that the *Völkischer Beobachter*<sup>1</sup> repeatedly condemned Kaiser's plays and that the Nazis protested against *Mississippi* and *Der Silbersee*. Yet the rightwing reaction was not monolithic. Although the *Völkischer Beobachter* was critical of *Konstantin Strobel* (152), *Juana* (215), *Kolportage* (356), *Der mutige Seefahrer* (385), *Zweimal Oliver* (420), *Oktoberfest* (461) and *Mississippi* (501), it was more favourable towards *Papiermühle* (439) and *Zwei Krawatten* (476). Also, the reviewer for the Nazi *Südwestdeutscher Freiheitskämpfer* (518) distanced himself from the behaviour of those over-zealous young party members who had voiced

-----

<sup>1</sup>The "Herausgeber" of this "Kampfblatt der national-sozialistischen Bewegung Grossdeutschlands" was Adolf Hitler.



their disapproval of *Mississippi* during its performance in Oldenburg. Whereas the Nazis protested against *Der Silbersee* in Magdeburg, accusing Kaiser of advocating class conflict and the Stadttheater of "Kulturbolschewismus", rightwing newspapers elsewhere recognised the revue's conciliatory, ethical aspects. Thus, the contemporary rightwing attitude towards Kaiser was not absolutely consistent.

However, Kaiser also suffered criticism from leftwing and workers' newspapers. As unemployment and the economy worsened towards the end of the 1920's, so too did political attitudes to his works polarise. In general, leftwing critics objected to those of Kaiser's dramas which seemed to escape from social issues during a period of severe social crisis. Kaiser appeared to be avoiding class struggle and ignoring the real issues of the day. The Düsseldorf *Volkszeitung* (528) saw *Mississippi* as a regression to Classical ideas and as symptomatic of the situation in bourgeois literature in that the last sparks of revolutionary commitment were being smothered by dated ideas. *Zweimal Oliver* also illustrated to this paper (407) the bankruptcy of contemporary intellectuals – it was all too easy to escape into madness from the problems of life. The Düsseldorf *Freiheit* (527), accusing Kaiser of falsifying history in *Mississippi*, criticised him for introducing the theme of passive resistance and for adding a religious dimension, instead of presenting the actual armed struggles between the farmers and the government. According to this





paper (492), *Hellseherei* had little importance for working people and only catered to the needs of the bourgeoisie. For the *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung* (429), *Papiermühle* was no better than *Kolportage*, which had already anticipated Kaiser's complete bankruptcy as a writer. Moreover, the Leipzig productions of *Hellseherei* and *Zwei Krawatten* only confirmed this bankruptcy (480). The Leipzig *Arbeiterpolitik* (479) objected to *Zwei Krawatten* since it merely pandered to the complacency of the philistines in that it offered escapist, fairy-tale solutions (lotteries and rich Americans) instead of presenting class struggle. Once more, Kaiser had revealed the decline of bourgeois culture. However, after he had fled into exile, Kaiser's reputation seemed to improve. Now, the critic for the Zürich *Volksrecht* was able to praise *Der Soldat Tanaka* as a work which deserved the respect and gratitude of thinking workers.

As for the major Berlin critics of the Weimar Republic, it is difficult to equate their opinions towards Kaiser's plays with a political attitude. For Thomas Rietzschel, the main feature of the leading bourgeois critics, of the Polgars, Jacobsohns, Kerrs and Iherings, at this time, was their diversity and individualism within a humanistic tradition.<sup>2</sup>

-----  
<sup>2</sup>Rietzschel writes: "Der Moralist war ein eminent politischer Zeitgenosse ohne Partei, als Statuten dienten ihm die humanistischen Traditionen. Er blieb allein, auch wenn er vier oder fünf Gleichgesinnte neben sich wusste. [...] In der Literaturkritik führte diese Position neben der schon erwähnten Politisierung zu einer auffälligen Pluralität der Meinungen. Zugespitzt könnte man von bürgerlichem Liberalismus in der Kritik sprechen. Die



Frequently journalists by profession, their sparkling literary essays often bore the distinctive stamp of the critic's personality rather than of a dogmatic political or aesthetic ideology. Rietzschel concludes that this sort of criticism entered a crisis around 1930, as political attitudes polarised with the decline of the German economy and as bourgeois intellectuals found themselves increasingly isolated.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, politically, it would seem rather paradoxical that Alfred Kerr, who, like Kaiser, had to escape from the Nazis into exile (although much earlier, on 15.2.1933), should have been so hostile towards Kaiser, while Herbert Ihering, who could continue writing in Nazi Germany from 1933-35 and who even took over Kerr's job on the *Berliner Tageblatt* after Kerr had emigrated, was favourably disposed towards Kaiser. In the case of Kerr and Ihering, one suspects that their contrasting attitudes towards Kaiser resulted not from political but from aesthetic considerations. Whereas Kerr's interest in Ibsen and Gerhart

-----  
<sup>2</sup>(cont'd) Kritiker beriefen sich kaum auf philosophische Systeme, ästhetische Theorien oder politische Strategien, sondern auf sich und auf überlieferte ethische Wertvorstellungen, was ihrer Kritik dann doch wieder eine gewisse Einheitlichkeit verlieh. Da der Moralist keine politische Kraft sah, die zu seiner Weltanschauung passte, da er sich zudem auf keinen ästhetischen Kanon berufen konnte – einen solchen hatten in Deutschland letztmals die Naturalisten mit einigem Erfolg zu formulieren versucht –, war er gezwungen, seine Subjektivität stärker ins Spiel zu bringen. Sie schien ihm die einzig verlässliche Basis" ("Kritik ohne Massstab? Gedanken zur bürgerlichen Literaturkritik der zwanziger Jahre," *Weimarer Beiträge*, 27, 1981, No. 7, 111).

<sup>3</sup>See Rietzschel, pp. 111-12 and pp. 124-27.





Hauptmann tended to make him intolerant towards the innovations of writers like Kaiser, Ihering, who was much more open-minded and flexible towards modern art, could react to Kaiser far more positively.<sup>4</sup>

When dealing with 585 reviews (and supporting documents) of more than 160 productions of 44 of Kaiser's plays all over the German-speaking countries, it is not possible to conclude with a simple, homogeneous statement. Kaiser's critical reception was far too complex, far too diversified and problematic to be summarised neatly in a short paragraph. In fact, his critical reception tends to mirror Kaiser's complex, contradictory nature as a writer. He was not simply an "Expressionist", not just a pacifist; his attitude to the "Neuer Mensch" was never uniform. The pacifist Kaiser could write plays like *Europa*; in the same year, he could publish the revolutionary *Die Lederköpfe* and the socially escapist *Oktobertag*, and the "Neuer Mensch" of the major Expressionist works could be rejected in plays like *Gats* and *Nebeneinander*, only to return in later works like *Der Soldat Tanaka*. R. H. Thomas' comment in 1938 is equally applicable to Kaiser's "oeuvre" as a whole: "Kaiser was one of the most prolific dramatists of the period and it is difficult to find a formula to unite the multitudinous threads of the forty-two dramas which he had published by 1938."<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>See Rühle, p. 1168 and pp. 1170-71.

<sup>5</sup>R. Samuel and R. H. Thomas, p. 76.





It is to be hoped that the documentation will prove to be of practical assistance to Kaiser scholars. It makes available in a reference work over 500 reviews, mostly unpublished since 1945 and often inaccessible to scholars outside Berlin, Texas and Alberta. These reviews from many different sources (from archives and libraries in Canada, Germany, Switzerland and Austria) have now been brought together in a single volume. In the commentary, I have tried to respond to many of the points raised in the reviews. Perhaps my findings might lead to a renewed preoccupation with Kaiser's comedies and a reevaluation of and renewed interest in neglected works like *Der gerettete Alkibiades*, *Die jüdische Witwe*, *König Hahnrei* and *Die Lederköpfe*? Perhaps also this study will be of interest not only to Kaiser scholars but also to all those concerned with Expressionist drama and the German theatre during a period of social and political turmoil. Finally, one hopes that it has fulfilled Armin Arnold's request:

Was ebenfalls noch im Argen liegt, ist die Rezeption: Was z. B. Ingrid Schuster und Ingrid Bode für Döblin getan haben (*Alfred Döblin im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen Kritik*, Francke Verlag, Bern und München 1973), müsste endlich auch für Kaiser getan werden.<sup>6</sup>

However, what is still needed is a study of the post-war period 1945–80. Leroy Shaw's article has made a start but a more detailed and up-to-date study is required...

---

<sup>6</sup>A. Arnold, "Vorwort" to *Kaiser Interpretationen*, pp. 5–6.



## II. Bibliography

### A. Bibliography of Reviews

#### *Der Fall des Schülers Vehgesack*

11.2.1915, Uraufführung, Neue Bühne, Vienna.

Polgar, Alfred. *Die Schaubühne*, 11 (1915), 181–82. [1]

Erstaufführung, n.d., Prague.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

#### *Grossbürger Möller*

20.11.1915, Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.

No reviews available.

#### *Die Bürger von Calais*

29.1.1917, Uraufführung, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M.

Dohse, Richard. *Die schöne Literatur*, 18, No. 4 (17.2.1917), 56–57. [4]

Edschmid, Kasimir. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 4.2.1917. In G. Rühle. *Theater für die Republik 1917–33*. Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1967, pp. 54–55. [3]

Simon, Heinrich. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 30.1.1917. In Rühle, pp. 55–56. [2]

14.10.1917, Neue Bühne, Vienna.

Polgar, Alfred. *Vossische Zeitung* (Berlin), 15.10.1917. In Rühle, pp. 56–57. [5]





[1918], Erstaufführung, Hoftheater, Weimar.

Herwig. *Hochland*, 15, No. 2 (July 1918), 446–48. [6]

[1918], Schauspielhaus, Munich. Dir.: Sinzheimer.

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 40, 5.10.1918, p. 573.

29.3.1919, Erstaufführung, Altes Theater, Leipzig.

Unger, Hellmuth. *Die schöne Literatur*, 20, No. 8 (12.4.1919), 92. [7]

27.9.1919, Volksbühne, Berlin.

anon. *Vossische Zeitung*, 28.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 6, p. 136. [14]

C. F. *Berliner Mittagszeitung*, 29.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 7, p. 161.

Falk, Norbert. *B. Z. am Mittag* (Berlin), 29.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 7, p. 162. [10]

W. H. *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 28.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 6, p. 136. [11]

Herrmann-Neisse, Max. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 1, No. 11 (1.11.1919), 354–55.

Hochdorf, Max. *Vorwärts* (Berlin), 28.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 6, p. 136. [13]

Ihering, Herbert. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 28.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 6, pp. 135–36 and in *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*. Ed. R. Badenhausen. Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1967, pp. 49–51. [9]

Jacobs, Monty. *Vossische Zeitung*, 29.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 6, pp. 136–37. [15]

Jacobsohn, Siegfried. *Das Jahr der Bühne*, vol. 9 (1919–20), 16–19. [8]

M. O. *Berliner Morgenpost*, 30.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 7, pp. 161–62.

K..r. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 28.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 6, p. 136.

K..-r. *Berliner Börsen Zeitung*, 28.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 6, p. 136.

K. S. *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 29.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 7, p. 162.

Strecker, Karl. *Tägliche Rundschau* (Berlin), 29.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 6, p. 136. [12]



[June 1920], Erstaufführung, Stadttheater, Halle.

- anon. *Die schöne Literatur*, 21, No. 14 (3.7.1920), 163.  
 L. *Volksstimme*, 12.6.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 27, p. 553.  
 Meyer, Adolf. *Hallische Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13.6.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 27, p. 553. [17]  
 Sellheim, Erich. *Hallesche Zeitung*, 12.6.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 27, pp. 552-53. [16]

21.11.1928, Erstaufführung, Stadttheater, Osnabrück.

- Dr. Hannss. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 -hp-. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 Dr. Sch. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 tz. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 -ube-. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 H. W. N.d., n.s., GKC.

15.12.1928, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.

- anon. *Freiheit*, 21.12.1928. [18]  
 H. *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt*, 18.12.1928.  
 Dr. Hendel. *Rhein- und Ruhr-Zeitung* (Duisburg), 19.12.1928.  
 Dr. K. L. *Dortmunder Generalanzeiger*, 19.12.1928.  
 L-l. *Volksstimme* (Duisburg), 27.12.1928.  
 Mai. *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, 17.12.1928. [20]  
 -rz. *Der Mittag*, 17.12.1928.  
 Schmid, F. *Westdeutsche Landeszeitung* (M. Gladbach), 18.12.1928.  
 Stolz, Heinz. *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (Essen), 18.12.1928. [19]  
 M. A. St. *Düsseldorfer Stadtanzeiger*, 18.12.1928.  
 -ü-. *Stadtanzeiger* (Cologne), 17.12.1928.  
 Witthaus, Wernher. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 29.12.1928.

[Jan. 1929], Gastspiel of the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus, Stadthalle, Mülheim.

- A.A. *Der Mittag*, 15.1.1929.  
 anon. *Kettwiger Zeitung*, 14.1.1929.

*Von morgens bis mitternachts*

28.4.1917, Uraufführung, Kammerspiele, Munich.





- Braungart, Richard. *Münchener Zeitung*, 30.4.1917. In Rühle, pp. 60–61 and in *Erläuterungen und Dokumente – Georg Kaiser: Von morgens bis mitternachts*. Ed. E. Schürer. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975, pp. 58–59. [22]
- Elchinger, Richard. *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 30.4.1917. In Rühle, pp. 58–60 and Schürer, pp. 55–58. [21]
- Oberlaender, L. G. *Die schöne Literatur*, 18, No. 11 (26.5.1917), 168–69. [23]
- P. S. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 20.5.1917. In Rühle, pp. 61–62 and Schürer, pp. 59–61.
- Steiger, Edgar. *Das literarische Echo*, 19 (1916–17), 1064–65. [24]

27.12.1917, Volksbühne, Vienna.

- Salten, Felix. N.d., n.s., GKC and in Schürer, p. 63. [26]
- Specht, Richard. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 28.12.1917. In Rühle, pp. 62–63 and in Schürer, pp. 61–62. [25]

18.3.1918, Erstaufführung, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M.

- anon. *Die schöne Literatur*, 19, No. 7 (6.4.1918), 80.
- Dohse, Richard. *Das Deutsche Drama*, 1, No. 3 (1.7.1918), 255. [27]

31.1.1919, Erstaufführung, Deutsches Theater, Berlin.

- anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [30]
- J. A. B. N.d., n.s., GKC. [31]
- Engel, Fritz. *Berliner Tageblatt*, Jan., GKC and in Schürer, pp. 63–66. [29]
- Faktor, Emil. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. An abbreviated version is reprinted in Schürer, p. 66. [28]
- Herrmann-Neisse, Max. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 1, No. 3 (1.3.1919), 89–90. [32]
- Jacobsohn, S. *Das Jahr der Bühne*, vol. 8 (1918–19), 189–92 and in Schürer, pp. 92–94. [33]
- Kerr, Alfred. *Die Welt im Drama*. Ed. G. F. Hering. Berlin: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1964<sup>2</sup>, pp. 256–58 and in Schürer, pp. 69–72. [34]
- J. Kn. 2.2.1919, n.s., GKC.
- Knudsen, H. *Die schöne Literatur*, 20, No. 5 (1.3.1919), 56.
- P. W. 2.2.1919, n.s., GKC, incomplete.

[1919], Pfauentheater, Zürich. Dir.: Révy.





T. *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 16.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 5, p. 124.

[April 1920], Erstaufführung, Neues Schauspielhaus, Königsberg i. Pr.

Goldstein, Ludwig. *Königsberger Hartungsche Zeitung*, 26.4.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 20, p. 421. [36]

Karrasch, Alfred. *Ostpreussische Zeitung*, 30.4.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 20, pp. 421–22. [37]

Wyneken, Hans. *Königsberger Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26.4.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 20, pp. 420–21. [35]

14.4.1921, Lessing-Theater, Berlin.

Ihering, H. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 16.4.1921. In *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*, pp. 89–91 and in Schürer, pp. 66–69. [39]

Jacobsohn, S. *Die Weltbühne*, 17 (1921), No. 18, 503–04. [40]

Knudsen, Hans. *Die schöne Literatur*, 22, No. 10 (7.5.1921), 126. [38]

[1922], Opernhaus, Hannover. Dir.: Dr. Rolf Roenneke.

Frerking, Johann. 11.3.1922. *Augenblicke des Theaters*. Ed. H. Rischbieter. Velber: Friedrich, 1963, pp. 43–45.

Erstaufführung, Dortmund.

Irmler, Karl (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC. [41]

[1924], Schauspielhaus, Leipzig.

Mack, Fritz. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 6.10.1924, GKC and Schürer, pp. 72–74. [42]

Natonek, Hans. *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, 6.10.1924, incomplete.

[1925], Schillertheater, Berlin.

anon. (1). N.d., n.s., GKC. [44]



anon. (2). N.d., n.s., GKC. [45]

K. A., *Die Zeit* (Berlin), 5.2.1925, GKC and in Schürer, pp. 75–76. [46]

Jacobsohn, S. *Die Weltbühne*, 21 (1925), No. 6, 207–08. [43]

Kubsch, Hugo. *Deutsche Tageszeitung* (Berlin), 4.2.1925, GKC and in Schürer, pp. 74–75. [47]

Schauspielhaus, [Dresden?]. Dir.: Berthold Viertel.

F. Z. N. d., n.s., GKC. -

Freie Volksbühne im Metropoltheater, Cologne. Dir.: F. R. Werkhäuser.

Schmits, Walter (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC.

Intimes Theater, Nuremberg.

Dr. K. L. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Die neue Bühne. Dir.: Eugen Felber.

P. N.d., n.s., GKC.

*Die Koralie*

27.10.1917, Uraufführung, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [51]

Büsching, A. B. Z. *am Mittag*, 29.10.1917. [52]

Diebold, Bernhard. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 29.10.1917. In Rühle, pp. 79–82. [48]

Dbd. [Diebold, B.]. N.d., n.s., GKC. (Longer version of above).

Dohse, Richard. *Die schöne Literatur*, 18, No. 24 (24.11.1917), 349–50. [50]

Dohse, Richard. *Das Deutsche Drama*, 1, No. 1 (1.1.1918), 67–68.

Edschmid, Kasimir. *Vossische Zeitung*, 30.10.1917 and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 6.11.1917. In Rühle, pp. 82–83. [49]





27.10.1917, Uraufführung, Kammerspiele, Munich.

anon. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 46, 17.11.1917, p. 789, incomplete.

Elchinger, R. N.d., n.s., GKC. [54]

Steiger, Edgar. *Das literarische Echo*, 20, No. 5 (1.12.1917), 279–81. [53]

17.1.1918, Erstaufführung, Kammerspiele des Deutschen Theaters, Berlin.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Düsel, Friedrich, *Westermanns Monatshefte*, Jg. 62, pp. 91–94. [58]

Engel, Fritz. N.d., n.s., GKC. [62]

Faktor, Emil. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 18.1.1918. In Rühle, pp. 83–84. [56]

Handl, Willi. N.d., n.s., GKC. [63]

Jacobsohn, S. *Das Jahr der Bühne*, vol. 7 (1917–18), 94–98. [55]

Kerr, Alfred. *Der Tag* (Berlin), 19.1.1918. In Rühle, pp. 84–86. [57]

Kienzl, Hermann. N.d., n.s., GKC. [60]

Knopf, Julius. N.d., n.s., GKC. [61]

Strecker, Karl. N.d., n.s., GKC. [59]

18/19.6.1918, Gastspiel of the Frankfurt Neues Theater at the Altes Theater, Leipzig.

Michael, Erich. *Die schöne Literatur*, 19, No. 14 (6.7.1918), 152.

1918, Volksbühne, Vienna.

Polgar, Alfred. *Ja und Nein*. II. Berlin: Rowohlt, 1926, 27–29.

Polgar, Alfred. *Die Schaubühne*, 14 (1918), 312–13. [64]

[1920], Kammerspiele, Hamburg.

H. W. F. [H. W. Fischer]. *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 5.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 3, pp. 56–57.

gh. *Hamburger Echo*, 5.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 3, p. 55.

C. M.-R. *Hamburger Correspondent*, 5.1.1920. In *Die Kritik*



(1920), No. 3, p. 56.

Piper, Carl Anton (Dr.). *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 5.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 3, pp. 55–56.

R. W. *Altonaer Nachrichten*, 7.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 3, pp. 54–55.

Wagner, Malte (Dr.). *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 5.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 3, p. 55.

## Neues Schauspielhaus, Königsberg i. Pr.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [65]

## Gas I

28.11.1918, Uraufführung, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M.

Dohse, Richard. *Die schöne Literatur*, 19, No. 26  
(21.12.1918), 269–70. [68]

Diebold, Bernhard. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 29.11.1918. In  
Rühle, pp. 125–27. [67]

Diebold, B. *Das literarische Echo*, 21, No. 8 (15.1.1919),  
480–81. [66]

dt. *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, 29.11.1918. [70]

M. G., *Kleine Presse* (Frankfurt/M.), 29.11.1918. [69]

28.11.1918, Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.

anon. *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, 30.11.1918.

anon. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 5.12.1918.

G. L. *Düsseldorfer Zeitung*, 29.11.1918. [74]

Mai. *Düsseldorfer Generalanzeiger*, 29.11.1918, D-L-A.

Abbreviated version in Rühle, pp. 127–28. [71]

K. R., *Lokalzeitung*, 30.11.1918.

Stolz, Heinz (Dr.). *Deutsche Zeitung* (Berlin), 2.12.1918.

Stolz, Heinz (Dr.). *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*,  
2.12.1918. [72]

St. *Volkszeitung*, 29.11.1918.

Stritzko, Joseph. *Freie Presse*, 29.11.1918. [73]

M. V., *Märk. Sprecher*, 6.12.1918.

Voja[?], Max. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 4.12.1918,  
incomplete.

A. Z., *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 2.12.1918.

25.2.1919, Volksbühne, Berlin.



Düsel, Friedrich. *Westermanns Monatshefte*, Jg. 63, pp. 188–90. [79]

Ihering, H. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 26.2.1919. In Rühle, pp. 128–29 and in *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*, pp. 39–41. [76]

Jacobsohn, S. *Das Jahr der Bühne*, vol. 8 (1918–19), 192–95. [75]

Kerr, Alfred. *Der Tag* (Berlin), 27.2.1919. In Rühle, pp. 129–31. [77]

Knudsen, Hans. *Die schöne Literatur*, 20, No. 8 (12.4.1919), 91. [78]

17.1.1919, Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Leipzig.

Ludwig, Robert. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 1, No. 7 (1.7.1919), 224–25.

Unger, Hellmuth. *Die schöne Literatur*, 20, No. 3 (1.2.1919), 32.

[Sept. 1919], Reussisches Landestheater, Gera. Dir.: Medenwaldt.

anon. *Geraer Zeitung*, 23.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 6, pp. 140–41.

anon. 20 Sept., n.s., GKC.

[Sept. 1919], Städtische Schauspiele, Baden-Baden.

anon. *Badeblatt Baden-Baden*, 27.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 7, p. 154. [80]

[1919], Stadttheater, Barmen.

Dr. S. B., *Bergisch-Märkische Zeitung* (Elberfeld-Barmen), 4.10.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 8, p. 183.

Schneider, Hanns Walther. *Barmer Zeitung*, 4.10.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 7, p. 154. [81]

[1919], Schauspielhaus, Hannover. Dir.: Dr. Rönnecke.

M. F., *Hannoverscher Kurier*, 4.10.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 8, p. 196.





[1919], Halberstadt.

Dr. K. *Halberstädter Tageblatt*, 4.10.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 8, p. 193. [82]

[Oct. 1919], Karlsruhe.

W. G. *Badische Landeszeitung* (Karlsruhe), 15.10.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 9, p. 226. [83]

9.11.1919, Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Munich.

anon. *Bayerischer Kurier* (Munich), 10.11.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 14, p. 371. [86]

R. B. *Münchener Zeitung*, 11.11.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 14, p. 371.

A. M.-K. *Bayerische Staatszeitung* (Munich), 11.11.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 13, p. 349. [84]

Kasack, Hermann. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 2, No. 2 (Feb. 1920), 45-46. [87]

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 46, 15.11.1919, pp. 705-06. [88]

Wolf. *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung*, 10.11.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 13, p. 349. [85]

[1919], Deutsches Theater, Stuttgart.

D. *Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt*, 4.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 17, p. 458.

[Dec. 1919], Deutsches Nationaltheater, Weimar.

B. S., *Thüringer Tageszeitung*, 22.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 1, pp. 18-19. [89]

Schrickel, Leonhard. *Weimarsche Landeszeitung Deutschland*, 22.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 1, p. 19. [90]

[Dec. 1919], Schauspielhaus, Graz.

Ertler, Bruno (Dr.). *Neues Grazer Abendblatt*, 29.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 3, pp. 52-53. [91]

Möller, Alfred (Dr.). *Tagespost*, 29.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 3, p. 53.



[Jan. 1920], Erstaufführung, Kammerspiele, Hamburg. Dir.:  
Erich Engel.

H. W. F. *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 30.1.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 7, p. 149.

Piper, Carl Anton (Dr.). *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 30.1.1920.  
In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 7, pp. 148–49.

Sakheim, Arthur. *Hamburger Volkszeitung*, 30.1.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 7, p. 149.

[Feb. 1920], Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Dresden.

Kummer, Friedrich. *Dresdner Anzeiger*, 27.2.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 11, p. 241. [92]

K. R. *Sächsische Staatszeitung*, 27.2.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 11, pp. 242–43.

Wollf, Julius Ferdinand. *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*,  
28.2.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 11, p. 242.  
[94]

Zimmermann, Felix (Dr.). *Dresdner Nachrichten*, 28.2.1920. In  
*Die Kritik* (1920), No. 11, pp. 241–42. [93]

[March 1920], Erstaufführung, Stadttheater, Augsburg.

J. V. *Augsburger Postzeitung*, 16.3.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 14, p. 274. [95]

A. W. *Neue Augsburger Zeitung*, 15.3.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 14, p. 274. [96]

[April 1920], Erstaufführung, Stadttheater, Freiburg i. B.  
Dir.: Fritz Rühling.

anon. *Freiburger Bote*, 20.4.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No.  
19, p. 392.

M. B., *Freiburger Zeitung*, 20.4.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920),  
No. 19, p. 392.

16.6.1920, Erstaufführung, Hessisches Landestheater,  
Darmstadt. Dir.: Loehr.

anon. *Darmstädter Tagblatt*, 17.6.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920),  
No. 27, p. 552.

Streuber, Albert. *Die schöne Literatur*, 21, No. 14  
(3.7.1920), 162–63.





[June 1920], Erstaufführung, Stadttheater, Dortmund. Dir.:  
W. Maurenbrecher.

Th. Sch. *Dortmunder Zeitung*, 30.6.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 29, p. 585.

[1920], Deutsches Volkstheater, Vienna.

Fontana, Oskar Maurus. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 3, Nos. 2/3  
(Feb. 1921), 63.

Polgar, Alfred. *Die Weltbühne*, 16, No. 52 (23.12.1920),  
736-37. [97]

7.9.1928, Schillertheater, Berlin.

Degner, Ernst. *Vorwärts* (Berlin), 8.9.1928. [101]

Engel, Fritz. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 8.9.1928. [105]

-er. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Fechter. *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8.9.1928. [99]

Ihering, H. *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*, pp. 274-76. [98]

H. K. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Kubsch, Hugo. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Leppmann, Franz. *B. Z. am Mittag*, 8.9.1928. [103]

A. Ltg. *Berliner Nachtausgabe*, 8.9.1928. [102]

R. Nbg. *12 Uhr Blatt* (Berlin), 8.9.1928, incomplete. [100]

Servaes, Franz. *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 8.9.1928,  
incomplete. [104]

-r [Karl Strecker]. *Rostocker Anzeiger*, Sept. 1928.

Erstaufführung, Stadttheater, Nuremberg. Dir.: Otto  
Liebscher.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

bd. *Nordbayerische Zeitung*, n.d., GKC.

n. N.d., n.s., GKC.

*Hölle Weg Erde*

5.12.1919, Uraufführung, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M.

H. H. B. *Frankfurter Volkszeitung*, 8.12.1919. In *Die Kritik*  
(1919), No. 17, pp. 441-42. [112]

Diebold, Bernhard. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 6.12.1919. In *Die*  
*Kritik* (1919), No. 17, p. 442 and in Rühle, pp.



184–87. [106]

Diebold, B. *Das literarische Echo*, 22 (1919–20), 475–76. [107]

Dohse, Richard. *Die schöne Literatur*, 20, No. 26 (20.12.1919), 295–96. [108]

Geisenheyner, Max. *Das Mittagsblatt* (Frankfurt/M.), 6.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 17, p. 441. [110]

Hildenbrandt, Fred. *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, 6.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 17, p. 441. [111]

Mathern, Carl. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Meier, Josef. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, No. 575, p. 5. [109]

F. R. *General-Anzeiger* (Frankfurt/M.), 6.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 17, pp. 442–43. [113]

20.1.1920, Erstaufführung, Lessing-Theater, Berlin.

Bie. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 21.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 6, p. 122, partly illegible. [118]

Engel, Fritz. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 21.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 6, pp. 122–23. [119]

Falk, Norbert. *B. Z. am Mittag*, 21.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 6, p. 123. [120]

W. C. G., *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, 21.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 6, pp. 123–24.

Handl, Willi. *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 21.1.1920. In Rühle, pp. 188–89. [115]

Handl, Willi. *Freie Deutsche Bühne*, 1, No. 23 (1.2.1920), 538–41. [116]

Herrmann-Neisse, Max. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 2, No. 3 (March 1920), 81.

Ihering, H. *Der Tag*, 22.1.1920. In Rühle, pp. 187–88. [114]

Jacobs, Monty. *Vossische Zeitung*, 21.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 6, p. 124. [121]

Jacobsohn, S. *Das Jahr der Bühne*, vol. 9 (1919–20), 79–82. [117]

Kienzl, Hermann. N.d., n.s., GKC. [122]

Kubsch, Hugo. *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 21.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 6, p. 123.

## Gas II

29.10.1920, Uraufführung, Vereinigte deutsche Theater, Brunn.

Dr. G. G., *Volksfreund*, 2.11.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 47, p. 822. [124]

El. S. *Tagesbote*, 2.11.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 47, p. 822. [123]



13.11.1920, Reichsdeutsche Uraufführung, Neues Theater,  
Frankfurt/M.

B. N.d., n.s., GKC. [130]

Diebold, Bernhard. *Das literarische Echo*, 23 (1920-21),  
393-94. [127]

Diebold, B. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 15.11.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 49, p. 856. [128]

Dohse, Richard. *Die schöne Literatur*, 21, No. 25  
(4.12.1920), 283-84. [125]

Frank, Rudolf. *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, 15.11.1920. In *Die*  
*Kritik* (1920), No. 49, pp. 855-56. [129]

Haubach, Theodor. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 3, No. 1 (Jan. 1921),  
14-17. [126]

[1920], Erstaufführung, Stadttheater, Magdeburg.

A. A. *Magdeburger Tageszeitung*, 16.11.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 49, pp. 859-60. [131]

*Gas I and II* [1924], Raimund-Theater, Vienna.

Polgar, A. *Die Weltbühne*, 20, No. 26 (26.6.1924), 894-97 and  
in *Ja und Nein*, II, 29-34. [132]

Hamburg, Kammerspiele. Dir.: Erich Engel.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

*Die Sorina*

6.3.1917, Uraufführung, Lessing-Theater, Berlin.

Düsel, Friedrich. Westermanns Monatshefte, Jg. 61, pp.  
405-06. [134]

Heilborn, Ernst. *Das literarische Echo*, 19 (1916-17),  
811-12. [135]

Jacobsohn, S. *Das Jahr der Bühne*, vol. 6 (1916-17), 123-26.  
[133]

Knopf, Julius. N.d., n.s., GKC. [137]

Knudsen, Hans. *Die schöne Literatur*, 18 (1917), 101-02.  
[138]

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 15, 14.4.1917,  
pp. 256-57. [136]





[1918], Volkstheater, Munich.

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 37, 14.9.1918,  
p. 528. [139]

[1919], Erstaufführung, Deutsches Theater, Stuttgart.

d. *Stuttgarter Neues Tageblatt*, 28.9.1919. In *Die Kritik*  
(1919), No. 7, p. 178. [140]

fs. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Stuttgart), 30.9.1919. In *Die*  
*Kritik* (1919), No. 7, p. 178. [141]

Erstaufführung, Neues Theater.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete.

### *Die Versuchung*

31.5.1917, Uraufführung, Thalia-Theater, Hamburg.

J. K. *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 1.6.1917. [143]

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 24, 16.6.1917,  
p. 412. [142]

C. A. P. *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 1.6.1917. [144]

[1919], Schauspielhaus, Cologne.

Stöppler, W. *Rheinische Volkswacht* (Cologne), 13.9.1919. In  
*Die Kritik* (1919), No. 5, p. 105. [145]

### *Der Zentaur*

23.10.1917, Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt/M.

Diebold, B. *Das literarische Echo*, 20 (1917-18), 278-79.  
[147]

Dohse, Richard. *Das deutsche Drama*, 1 (1918), 62-63.

Dohse, Richard. *Die schöne Literatur*, 18 (1917), 334-35.  
[148]

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 45, 10.11.1917,  
p. 774. [146]



[1919], Erstaufführung (*Konstantin Strobel*), Schauspielhaus, Munich.

R. B. N.d., n.s., GKC. [150]

Dr. J. Fr. *Neue Badische Landeszeitung*, 2.8.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 1, pp. 17-18. [151]

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 30, 26.7.1919. p. 435. [149]

9.1.1920 (*Konstantin Strobel*), Schauspielhaus, Munich.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [153]

W. *Völkischer Beobachter*, Jg. 34, 14.1.1920, 3-4. [152]

[1920], Erstaufführung (*Konstantin Strobel*), Intimes Theater, Nuremberg.

bd. *Nordbayerische Zeitung*, n.d., GKC, incomplete. [154]

Rudi, Gustav. *Bayerische Volkszeitung*, 23.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 6, p. 138. [155]

[1921] (*Konstantin Strobel*), Stadttheater, Vienna.

Fontana, Oskar Maurus. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 3, Nos. 8/9 (Dec. 1921), 195.

4.9.1925, Uraufführung (*Margarine*), Komödienhaus, Berlin.

anon. (1). N.d., n.s., GKC. [160]

anon. (2). N.d., n.s., GKC. [162]

F. D. N.d., n.s., GKC. [159]

E. F. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Faktor, Emil. N.d., n.s., GKC. [156]

Falk, Norbert. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [158]

Fechter. N.d., n.s., GKC. [157]

Wolfradt, Willi. *Das blaue Heft*, 7 (1925), Oct., 9-10. [161]

*Rektor Kleist*

26.1.1918, Uraufführung, Neues Schauspielhaus, Königsberg.

Goldstein, Ludwig. N.d., n.s., GKC. [166]





Hesse, Otto Ernst. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [165]

H. W. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Wyneken, Hans. *Berliner Tageblatt*, Feb., GKC. [163]

Wyneken, Hans. *Das literarische Echo*, 20 (1917-18), 717.  
[164]

[1919], Erstaufführung, Intimes Theater, Nuremberg.

dt. *Fränkischer Kurier* (Nuremberg), 3.11.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 12, p. 316. [167]

Dr. Ledermann. N.d., n.s., GKC.

n. *Nürnberger Zeitung*, 4.11.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 12, p. 316. [168]

### *Das Frauenopfer*

23.3.1918, Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.

anon. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 26.3.1918.

J. v. H. *Theater-Courier*, 25.4.1918.

Hr. *Tageblatt*, 25.3.1918.

M. *Düsseldorfer Generalanzeiger*, 25.3.1918. [169]

Röttger, Karl. *Düsseldorfer Lokalzeitung*, 30.3.1918. [170]

Stolz, Heinz. *Düsseldorfer Zeitung*, 25.3.1918. [171]

Stolz, Heinz. *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 25.3.1918.

A. Z. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 10.4.1918.

[1919], Stadttheater, Mainz.

anon. *Mainzer Journal*, 20.8.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 1, p. 16. [172]

[1919], Kammerspiele im Schauspielhaus, Cologne.

F. B., *Kölner Tageblatt*, 28.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 7, pp. 164-65.

Schmits, Walter (Dr.). *Kölnische Zeitung*, 29.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 7, p. 165. [173]

[1920], Erstaufführung, Bellevuetheater, Stettin.

H. *Generalanzeiger*, 4.5.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 21, p. 447. [174]



[1920], Erstaufführung, Nationaltheater, Mannheim.

Droop, Fritz. *Mannheimer Tageblatt*, 22.5.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 23, p. 488. [176]

Nikolaus, Paul. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 2, No. 8 (Aug. 1920), 224.

Stahl, Ernst Leopold (Dr.). *Neue Badische Landeszeitung*, 22.5.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 23, pp. 488–89. [175]

[1920], Erstaufführung, Stadttheater, Essen.

M. *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 3.7.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 30, p. 597. [177]

28.3.1922, Schauspielhaus, Kiel.

Lobsien, Wilhelm. *Das literarische Echo*, 24 (1921–22), 988. [178]

11.11.1922, Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Leipzig.

H. B., *Kleine Chronik*, 14.11.1922. [179]

Delpy, Egbert (Dr.) (1). *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 12.11.1922. [181]

Delpy, Egbert (Dr.) (2). *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 12.11.1922.

Michael, Erich. *Die schöne Literatur*, 23 (1922), 414.

Richter, Hans Georg. 14.11.1922, n.s., GKC. [180]

12.7.1923, Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Dresden.

Kummer, Friedrich. N.d., n.s., GKC. [182]

F. Z. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Zimmermann, Felix (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [183]

Wollf, Julius Ferdinand. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete.

[Dec. 1929], Erstaufführung, Tribüne, Berlin.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

anon. *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, n.d., GKC. [186]

anon. *Vossische Zeitung*, n.d., GKC. [187]

anon. (1). *Berliner Morgenpost*, n.d., GKC. [188]



anon. (2). *Berliner Morgenpost*, n.d., GKC.  
 anon. *Berliner Lokalanzeiger*, n.d., GKC. [189]  
 anon. *Neue Berliner 12 Uhr-Zeitung*, n.d., GKC. [191]  
 anon. *Berliner Tageblatt*, n.d., GKC.  
 anon. *Die Stunde* (Vienna), n.d., GKC. [190]  
 anon. *Filmkurier*, n.d., GKC.  
 anon. *Berlin-Steglitzer Anzeiger*, n.d., GKC. [192]  
 anon. *Der Montag-Morgen* (Berlin), n.d., GKC. [193]  
 anon. *Die Welt am Montag* (Berlin), n.d., GKC.  
 anon. *Vorwärts*, n.d., GKC. [194]  
 anon. *8 Uhr Abendblatt*, n.d., GKC. [195]  
 anon. *Der Tag*, n.d., GKC.  
 anon. *Germania*, n.d., GKC. [196]  
 Burger, Erich. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 24.12.1929. [185]  
 Ihering, H. Jan. 1930, n.s., GKC, incomplete. [197]  
 J. M. N.d, n.s., GKC. [184]

Kammerspiele, Kassel. Dir.: Bodo Bronsky.

Scheller, Will. N.d., n.s., GKC.

*Drei Einakter – Claudius, Friedrich und Anna and Juana*

21.10.1918, Uraufführung (Trilogy), Neues Theater,  
 Frankfurt/M.

Diebold, B. *Das literarische Echo*, 21 (1918–19), 287. [198]  
 Dohse, Richard. *Die schöne Literatur*, 19 (1918), 240. [199]

21.10.1918, Uraufführung (Trilogy), Städtische Schauspiele,  
 Baden-Baden.

No reviews available.

[Feb. 1919], Erstaufführung (Trilogy), Württembergisches  
 Landestheater (Kleines Haus).

D. *Neues Tagblatt*, 1919, GKC, partly illegible. [201]  
 T. K. *Schwäbischer Merkur* (Stuttgart), 17.2.1919. [200]

16.9.1919, Erstaufführung ("Die Milchstrasse"),  
 Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.





anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [203]

ha. N.d., n.s., GKC. [205]

-n.- *Düsseldorfer Zeitung*, 17.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 5, p. 107. [204]

-nn. *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt*, 18.9.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 5, p. 107. [202]

15.2.1920, Erstaufführung (*Juana*), Neues Theater, Leipzig.

anon. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 17.2.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 9, p. 202. [208]

W. B. *Freie Presse*, 17.2.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 9, p. 202. [207]

Michael, F. *Leipziger Tageblatt*, 16.2.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 9, p. 202. [206]

n. *Leipziger Zeitung*, 16.2.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 9, pp. 202-03. [209]

[May 1920], Erstaufführung (*Juana*), Kammerspiele, Hamburg.

erka. *Hamburger Echo*, 21.5.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 23, p. 485. [212]

H. W. F., *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 21.5.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 23, p. 485. [210]

M. W. *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 21.5.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 23, p. 485. [213]

R. W. *Altonaer Nachrichten*, 22.5.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 23, pp. 484-85. [211]

11.12.1921, (*Friedrich und Anna*), Kleines Theater, Leipzig.

Michael, Erich. *Die schöne Literatur*, 23 (1922), 47.

7.1.1925, Uraufführung, (*Juana as an Opera*), Stadttheater (Intimes Theater), Nuremberg.

No reviews available.

[1925], Erstaufführung, (*Juana as an Opera*), Nationaltheater, Munich.

anon. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 50, 10.12.1925, p. 823. [214]

Dr. B. *Völkischer Beobachter*, Jg. 38, 9.12.1925, p. 2. [215]



(*Juana*), Neue Freie Bühne, Cologne. Dir.: Alfons Godard.

Schmits, Walter (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC.

[After 1924] (*Juana*), Stadttheater, Osnabrück. Dir.: Oskar Fritz Schuh.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

H. Dg. N.d., n.s., GKC.

W. H. N.d., n.s., GKC.

-m-. N.d., n.s., GKC.

-r. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Dr. Rsch. N.d., n.s., GKC.

### *Der Brand im Opernhaus*

16.11.1918, Uraufführung, Kammerspiele, Hamburg.

anon. *Die schöne Literatur*, 19 (1918), 263.

Greter. N.d., n.s., GKC. [216]

16.11.1918, Uraufführung, Stadttheater (Intimes Haus)  
Nuremberg.

anon. (1). N.d., n.s., GKC. [222]

anon. (2). N.d., n.s., GKC. [224]

Deinhardt, H. (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC. [218]

-f-. *Tägliche Rundschau* (Berlin), n.d., GKC. [226]

G. 17 Nov., n.s., GKC. [221]

Hampe, Theodor. *Das literarische Echo*, 21 (1918-19), 353-54.  
[217]

k. N.d., n.s., GKC. [220]

jm. N.d., n.s., GKC. [223]

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 4, 25.1.1919,  
p. 51.

-ö-. N.d., n.s., GKC. [219]

Ps. N.d., n.s., GKC. [225]

26.11.1918, Uraufführung (revised version), Kleines  
Schauspielhaus, Charlottenburg, Berlin.

Jacobsohn, S. *Das Jahr der Bühne*, vol. 8 (1918-19), 167.  
[227]

Kienzl, Hermann. N.d., n.s., GKC. [228]





Knudsen, Hans. *Die schöne Literatur*, 19 (1918), 259–60.  
[229]

[1919], Gastspiel presented by Erich Ziegel and Mirjam Horwitz, Kammerspiele, Munich.

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 25, 21.6.1919, pp. 355–56.

Oct. 1919, Alberttheater, Dresden.

Günther, Alfred. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 1, No. 12 (Dec. 1919), 389–90.

[1919], Kammerspiele des Deutschen Volkstheaters, Vienna.

O. M. F. N.d., n.s., GKC. [230]

p. f. *Der Neue Tag* (Vienna), 3.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 17, p. 460.

A. G. *Arbeiterzeitung* (Vienna), 3.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 17, p. 460.

m. *Neues Wiener Journal*, 2.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 17, p. 460. [231]

[1919], Stadttheater, Bern. Dir.: Carl Ludwig Peppler.

E. H. *Der Bund*, 18.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 1, pp. 5–6.

K. *Berner Tagblatt*, 18.12.1919. In *Die Kritik* (1919), No. 1, p. 5.

[1920], Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Leipzig.

Delpy, Egbert (Dr.). *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 16.4.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 18, p. 373.

Delpy, Egbert (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC. [232]

Natonek, Hans. *Leipziger Zeitung*, 15.4.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 18, p. 374. [233]

Natonek, Hans. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 2, No. 5 (May 1920), 133. [234]

Richter, Hans Georg. *Leipziger Tageblatt*, 16.4.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 18, pp. 373–74. [235]



[1920], Pfauentheater, Zürich.

-nn. *Neue Zürcher Nachrichten*, 16.9.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 41, p. 735.

30.9.1921, Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.

anon. *Freie Presse*, 2.10.1921.

anon. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 6.10.1921.

anon. *Freiheit*, 2.10.1921. [236]

anon. *Krefelder Zeitung*, 29.11.1921.

Franken. *Volkszeitung*, 5.10.1921. [237]

G. *Düsseldorfer Zeitung*, 2.10.1921.

H. *Niederrheinischer Bote*, 15.10.1921.

G. K. *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt*, 2.10.1921.

H. W. K. *Lokalzeitung*, 7.10.1921.

Lehmann, Karl (Dr.). *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 5.10.1921.

O. A. Sch. *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, 2.10.1921.

Schreiner. *Der Bürger*, 1.10.1921.

Stolz, Heinz (Dr.). *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 1.10.1921.

-Tas.- *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 12.10.1921.

[1925], Staatliches Schauspielhaus, Berlin.

Falk, Norbert. *B. Z. am Mittag*, 4.6.1925. [243]

Fechter. *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5.6.1925. [238]

E. M. 5.6.1925, n.s., GKC. [242]

Mysing. N.d., n.s., GKC, partly illegible. [240]

Pinthus, Kurt. *8 Uhr Abendblatt*, 4.6.1925. [239]

W. St. 4.6.1925, n.s., GKC. [241]

[1925], Schauspielhaus, Bremen.

ko. *Weserzeitung* (Bremen), 10.6.1925.

Lindemann. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete.

Cologne, Kammerspiele, n.d.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete.

Schmits, Walter (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC.

[1925], Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt/M.



anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Diebold, Bernhard. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 9.2.1925,  
incomplete.

### *Der gerettete Alkibiades*

29.1.1920, Uraufführung, Residenz-Theater, Munich.

anon. *Das Kabel* (Berlin), No. 3, 1920, GKC. [247]

anon. *Das Bayerische Vaterland*, 2.2.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 8, p. 181. [250]

anon. *Neue Zeitung*, 4.2.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 8,  
p. 181, incomplete.

Dr. HB. *Münchener Zeitung*, 30.1.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920),  
No. 7, p. 156. [253]

Dachs, J. *Bayerischer Kurier*, 31.1.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 7, p. 156.

Elchinger, Richard. *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 30.1.1920.  
In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 8, p. 181. [251]

G. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 3.2.1920, incomplete. [246]

Greeven, E. A. *Das literarische Echo*, 22 (1919-20), 733.  
[248]

Martens, Kurt. *Das junge Deutschland*, 3 (1920), 168. [245]

Mensi-Klarbach, Alfred. *Bayerische Staatszeitung*, 31.1.1920.  
In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 7, pp. 155-56. [249]

Oberlaender, L. G. *Die schöne Literatur*, 21 (1920), 76.

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 6, 7.2.1920, p.  
85. [244]

Wolf. *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung*, 30.1.1920. In *Die*  
*Kritik* (1920), No. 7, p. 156. [252]

[1920], Erstaufführung, Württembergisches Landestheater,  
Stuttgart.

anon. *Das Kabel*, No. 3, 1920, GKC.

anon. *Berliner Börsen-Kurier*, 2.2.1920. [254]

D. *Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt*, 3.2.1920. In *Die Kritik*  
(1920), No. 7, p. 160. [255]

T. K. *Schwäbischer Merkur*, 1.2.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920),  
No. 7, p. 160. [256]

H. M. *Württembergische Zeitung*, 2.2.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920),  
No. 7, p. 160. [257]

13.5.1922, Stadttheater, Nuremberg.

Decker, Georg. *Die schöne Literatur*, 23 (1922), 205.





[1924], Darmstadt. Dir.: Kurt Barré.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

## *Europa*

5.11.1920, Uraufführung, Grosses Schauspielhaus, Berlin.

- Bie. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 6.11.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 47, p. 818. [268]  
 F. E. [Fritz Engel]. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 6.11.1920. [258]  
 Engel, Fritz. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 7.11.1920, GKC and in *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 47, p. 818. [259]  
 Faktor, Emil. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 6.11.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 47, p. 818. [267]  
 Fechter. *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7.11.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 47, pp. 818–19. [266]  
 Heilborn, Ernst. *Das literarische Echo*, 23 (1920–21), 348. [261]  
 Hochdorf, Max. *Vorwärts*, 6.11.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 47, p. 819. [269]  
 Jacobs, Monty. *Vossische Zeitung*, 6.11.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 47, pp. 819–20. [263]  
 Jacobsohn, S. *Das Jahr der Bühne*, vol. 10 (1920–21), 46–49. [270]  
 Kasack, Hermann. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 2 (1920), 331–32. [260]  
 Knudsen, Hans. *Die schöne Literatur*, 21 (1920), 299. [262]  
 M. M. *Vossische Zeitung*, 6.11.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 47, p. 820. [264]  
 Strecker, Karl. *Tägliche Rundschau*, 7.11.1920. In *Die Kritik* (1920), No. 47, p. 819. [265]

## *Die jüdische Witwe*

31.1.1921, Uraufführung, Landestheater, Meiningen.

- anon. (1). N.d., n.s., GKC. [272]  
 anon. (2). N.d., n.s., GKC. [273]  
 K. H. L. 2.2.1921, n.s., GKC. [271]

7.11.1925, Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, Berlin.

- anon. (1). N.d., n.s., GKC. [276]  
 anon. (2). N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [277]



- Bie, Oscar (Prof. Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC. [275]  
 Eloesser, Arthur. *Das blaue Heft*, 7 (1925), 144-46. [280]  
 Faktor, Emil. N.d., n.s., GKC. [274]  
 Falk, Norbert. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [278]  
 Jacobsohn, S. *Die Weltbühne*, 21 (1925), No. 46, 769-70.  
 [279]

### Kanzlist Krehler

- 14.2.1922, Uraufführung, Kammerspiele des Deutschen Theaters, Berlin.

- Düsel, Friedrich. *Westermanns Monatshefte* (1922), pp. 193-94. [286]  
 Heilborn, Ernst. *Das literarische Echo*, 24 (1921-22), 795. [284]  
 Heilborn, Ernst. N.d., n.s., GKC. [285]  
 Ihering, H. 15.2.1922. *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*, pp. 108-09. [281]  
 Krafft, Erich (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC. [282]  
 Knudsen, Hans. *Die schöne Literatur*, 23 (1922), 108. [283]

[1922], Kammerspiele des Raimund-Theaters, Vienna.

- Fontana, Oskar Maurus. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 4, Nos. 5/6 (June 1922), 153-54. [287]

[1922], Schaubühne, Munich.

- Sachse, Otto (Dr.). *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 41, 14.10.1922, p. 491. [288]

### Der Protagonist

16.3.1922, Uraufführung (Schauspiel), Lobe-Theater, Breslau.

- Freund, Erich. *Das literarische Echo*, 24 (1921-22), 987-88. [289]

25.3.1926, Uraufführung (Oper), Staatsoper, Dresden.

No reviews available.





*David und Goliath*

[1921], Raimund-Theater, Vienna.

Fontana, Oskar Maurus. *Die neue Schaubühne*, 3, Nos. 8/9  
(Dec. 1921), 195. [290]

19.3.1922, Uraufführung[?], Stadttheater, Minden/Westf.

W. K. 1922, n.s., GKC. [292]

Krieg, Walter. N.d., n.s., GKC. [291]

11.10.[1922], Landestheater, Karlsruhe.

Raab, Rudolf. *Die schöne Literatur*, 23 (1922), 399.

1.11.1924, Wallner-Theater, Berlin.

anon. *Deutsche Zeitung* (Berlin), 1.11.1924. [293]

anon. *National-Zeitung* (Berlin), 2.11.1924, incomplete.  
[294]

anon. *Berliner Morgenpost*, 1.11.1924. [295]

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete.

Degner, Ernst. N.d., n.s., GKC. [298]

F. E. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 1.11.1924. [302]

Knudsen, Hans. *Die schöne Literatur*, 25 (1924), 485–86.

Leppmann, Franz. *B. Z. am Mittag*, 1.11.1924. [297]

Metzger, Erich. *Deutsche Tageszeitung* (Berlin), 1.11.1924.  
[296]

Michel, Artur. *Vossische Zeitung*, 1.11.1924. [299]

A. Mü. *Berliner Morgenpost*, 1.11.1924. [301]

Mysing. N.d., n.s., GKC. [300]

[1925], Residenz-Theater, Munich.

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 5, 29.1.1925,  
pp. 81–82.

Scharrer, Eduard (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC.

*Die Flucht nach Venedig*



9.2.1923, Uraufführung, Stadttheater (Intimes Theater),  
Nuremberg.

Decker, Georg. *Die schöne Literatur*, 24 (1923), 117-18.  
[304]

Lherman[n?], Jo. N.d., n.s., GKC. [303]  
-n. 10 Feb., n.s., GKC. [305]

27.3.1923, Erstaufführung, Kammerspiele des Deutschen  
Theaters, Berlin.

anon. 2 April, n.s., GKC. [308]

Düsel, Friedrich. *Westermanns Monatshefte*, Jg. 67, pp.  
407-08. [307]

Engel, Fritz. N.d., n.s., GKC. [310]

Heilborn, Ernst. *Das literarische Echo*, 25 (1922-23),  
800-01. [306]

Mysing. N.d., n.s., GKC. [309]

[1925], Schauspielhaus, Munich.

anon. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 43, 22.10.1925, p. 702.  
[311]

[1929], Gastspiel Agnes Straub, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.

hb. *Düsseldorfer Stadtanzeiger*, 1.11.1929.

H. K., *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt*, 1.11.1929.

H. W. K. *Düsseldorfer Lokalzeitung*, 3.11.1929. [312]

Deutsches Theater, Prague.

Lederer, Viktor (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC.

*Gilles und Jeanne*

2.6.1923, Uraufführung, Altes Theater, Leipzig.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Grothe, Hugo. N.d., n.s., GKC. [315]

Michael, Erich. *Die schöne Literatur*, 24 (1923), 259. [313]

Witkowski, Georg. *Das literarische Echo*, 25 (1922-23),



1000-02. [314]

Aug. 1924, Dramatisches Theater, Berlin.

anon. (1). N.d., n.s., GKC. [320]

anon. (2). N.d., n.s., GKC. [321]

anon. (3). N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete.

Ihering, H. 30.8.1924. *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*. II. Berlin: Aufbau, 1959, 47-49. [316]

Meyerfeld, Max (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC. [319]

Mühr, Alfred. N.d., n.s., GKC. [317]

Mysing. N.d., n.s., GKC. [318]

[Jan. 1926], Erstaufführung, Halberstadt.

Dr. Pz. *Halberstädter Zeitung*, 28.1.1926. [322]

*Nebeneinander*

3.11.1923, Uraufführung, Lustspielhaus Die Truppe, Berlin.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [326]

F. D. N.d., n.s., GKC. [328]

Faktor, Emil. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 5.11.1923. In Rühle, pp. 481-83. [323]

Jacobsohn, S. *Die Weltbühne*, 1923. In Rühle, pp. 484-85. [325]

Knudsen, Hans. *Die schöne Literatur*, 24 (1923), 439. [327]

Sternaux, Ludwig. *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 5.11.1923. In Rühle, pp. 483-84. [324]

17.11.1923, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M.

Diebold, B. *Das literarische Echo*, 26 (1923-24), 236.

[1924], Raimund-Theater, [Vienna].

Polgar, Alfred. *Die Weltbühne*, 20 (1924), No. 23, 780-82. [329]

Polgar, Alfred. *Ja und Nein*, II, 34-37.

[1924], Kammerspiele, Munich.





anon. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 2, 10.1.1924, p. 29. [330]  
M. N.d., n.s., GKC.

16.4.1925, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.

anon. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 6.5.1925.  
anon. *Freiheit*, 23.4.1925.  
anon. *Germania*, 20.5.1925.  
anon. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 14.5.1925. [334]  
anon. 20.6.1925, n.s., D-L-A.  
h. *Düsseldorfer Zeitung*, 18.4.1925. [332]  
H. *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt*, 18.4.1925. [333]  
M. *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, April 1925. [331]  
-pg-. *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 21.4.1925.

May 1925, Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Cologne.

F. B. N.d., n.s., GKC. [335]  
Dr. R. R. N.d., n.s., GKC. [338]  
Schmits, Walter (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [337]  
Dr. Hz. St. N.d., n.s., GKC. [336]  
Wenz, Richard. N.d., n.s., GKC.

10.12.1925, Erstaufführung, Zentraltheater [Dresden?].

L. F. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete.  
pm. (1). N.d., n.s., GKC.  
pm. (2). N.d., n.s., GKC.  
Zimmermann, Felix (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [339]

1925, Münster. Dir.: Schultze.

eb-be. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
Dr. Egbring. N.d., n.s., GKC.

[1926], Theater in der Klosterstrasse.

H. S-l. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Sept. 1931, Volksbühne, Berlin.

anon. *Westermanns Monatshefte*, Jg. 76, p. 307. [342]



Burger, Erich. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 17.9.1931. [341]  
 Ihering, H. N.d., n.s., GKC. [340]

Barmen-Elberfeld. Dir.: Dr. Legband.

Ollendorf. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Kammerspiele, Hamburg.

M. A. M. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 C. M.-R. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 Schabbel, Otto. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete.

Staatstheater, Kassel. Dir.: Pape.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Grosses Haus. Dir.: Dr. Thur Himmighoffen.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

### *Kolportage*

27.3.1924, Uraufführung, Lessing-Theater, Berlin.

Elster, Hanns Martin. N.d., n.s., GKC. [349]  
 Heilborn, Ernst. *Das literarische Echo*, 26 (1923-24), 485.  
 [346]  
 Ihering, H. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 28.3.1924. Von  
*Reinhardt bis Brecht*, ed. Badenhausen, pp. 163-65  
 and in Rühle, 514-16. [343]  
 Jacobsohn, S. *Die Weltbühne*, 20 (1924), No. 15, 479-80.  
 [345]  
 M. M. N.d., n.s., GKC. [347]  
 Mysing. N.d., n.s., GKC. [348]  
 Sternaux, Ludwig. *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 28.3.1924. In  
 Rühle, pp. 513-14. [344]

27.3.1924, Uraufführung, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [350]





Deubel, Werner. *Die schöne Literatur*, 25 (1924), 202-03.  
[351]

Review of both premieres.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [352]

[1924], Schauspielhaus, Munich. Dir.: Werck.

Oberlaender, L. G. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 21, 22.5.1924,  
p. 317.

1.10.1924, Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Neustadt  
[Dresden].

Kummer, Friedrich. N.d., n.s., GKC. [353]

Schönwolf, Karl (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC.

Zimmermann, Felix (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC. [354]

[1925], Schlossparktheater, Steglitz. Dir.: Erwin Biegel.

Wlode, J.-H. 11.11.1925, n.s., GKC.

[1925], Wallner-Theater, Berlin.

F. Jo. N.d., n.s., GKC.

-ner. 7.12.1925, n.s., GKC. [355]

[1926], Schauspielhaus, Munich.

anon. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 4, 23.1.1926, p. 63.

J. St-g. *Völkischer Beobachter*, Jg. 39, 15.1.1926, p. 2.  
[356]

[1928], Theater in der Kommandantenstrasse. Dir.: Hanns Leo  
Reich.

G. H. *Berliner Morgenpost*, 16.2.1928.



Sept. 1929, Komödie, Berlin.

- anon. *Kleines Journal*, 26.9.1929. [360]  
 Falk, Norbert. *B. Z.*, 17.9.1929. [364]  
 Ihering, H. 17.9.1929. *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*. II. Berlin:  
     Aufbau, 1959, 431-34. [357]  
 Jacobs, Monty. *Vossische Zeitung*, 17.9.1929. [365]  
 Kerr, Alfred. *Die Welt im Drama*, pp. 255-56. [359]  
 E. M. *Berliner Morgenpost*, 17.9.1929, incomplete. [361]  
 Nürnberg, Rolf. *12 Uhr Blatt*, 17.9.1929. [363]  
 Pinthus, Kurt. *8 Uhr Abendblatt der National-Zeitung*,  
     (Berlin), 17.9.1929. [358]  
 K. S. [Karl Strecker]. *Rostocker Zeitung*, n.d., GKC. [362]

Neues Theater, Chemnitz. Dir.: Papst.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Schauspielhaus, Cologne. Dir.: Godard.

Brüggemann, G. A. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Kammerspiele. Dir.: Gustaf Gründgens.

P. Th. H. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Leipzig. Dir.: Viehweg.

Mendheim, Max (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC.

Stuttgart. Dir.: Dr. Curt Elwenspoek.

v. C. N.d., n.s., GKC.

*Gats*

9.4.1925, Uraufführung, Deutsches Volkstheater, Vienna.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [368]  
 Arnold, Robert F. *Das literarische Echo*, 27 (1924-25),



544-45. [366]

Lehner, Fritz. *Die schöne Literatur*, 26 (1925), 236-37.  
[367]

Millenkovich-Morold, Max von. N.d., n.s., GKC. [369]

**Thalia-Theater, Hamburg.**

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [373]

F. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [372]

Hoffmann, P. Th. (Dr.). 24 Sept., n.s., GKC. [370]

Kühn, Erich. N.d., n.s., GKC. [371]

*Der mutige Seefahrer*

12.11.1925, Uraufführung, Staatliches Schauspielhaus,  
Dresden.

anon. (1). N.d., n.s., GKC. [376]

anon. (2). N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete.

F. K. N.d., n.s., GKC. [379]

Kummer, Friedrich. N.d., n.s., GKC. [380]

Reichelt, Johannes. *Das literarische Echo*, 28 (1925-26),  
231. [374]

Wollf, Julius Ferdinand. *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*,  
14.11.1925. [375]

F. Z. N.d., n.s., GKC. [377]

Zimmermann, Felix (Dr.). N.d., n.s., GKC. [378]

[1926], Erstaufführung, Deutsches Volkstheater, Vienna.

anon. (1). Jan. 1926, n.s., GKC, incomplete. [382]

anon. (2). N.d., n.s., GKC. [383]

Polgar, Alfred. *Die Weltbühne*, 22 (1926), No. 4, 148-50.  
[381]

[Jan. 1926], Erstaufführung, Kammerspiele, Munich.

anon. *Allgemeine Rundschau*, No. 4, 23.1.1926, p. 63. [384]

J. St-g. *Völkischer Beobachter*, Jg. 39, 19.1.1926, p. 2.  
[385]

31.5.1926, Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.





anon. *D. Z. am Sonntag*, 5.6.1926. [388]  
 anon. *Westdeutsche Woche*, 26.6.1926.  
 anon. *Freiheit*, 2.6.1926.  
 anon. *Niederrheinische Volkszeitung*, 5.6.1926.  
 O. G. *Bergische Zeitung*, 22.6.1926. [390]  
 h. *Der Mittag*, 1.6.1926. [389]  
 H. *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt*, 3.6.1926. [387]  
 M. *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, 1.6.1926. [391]  
 Sch. *Volkszeitung* (Düsseldorf), 5.6.1926.  
 A. W. *Der Führer* (Düsseldorf), 6.6.1926.  
 xix. *Düsseldorfer Stadt-Anzeiger*, 1.6.1926. [386]

[1927], Thaliatheater, Berlin.

Ihering, H. 2.3.1927. *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*. Ed.  
 Badenhausen, pp. 246–47. [392]

Erstaufführung, Stadttheater (Kammerspiele), Lübeck. Dir.:  
 Karl Heidmann.

Dr. F. J. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 Re. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 S. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Erstaufführung, Stadttheater, Osnabrück. Dir.: Oskar Fritz  
 Schuh.

anon. (1). N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 anon. (2). N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 W. H. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 Meyer, Cäcilie. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 M. W. N.d., n.s., GKC.

*Zweimal Oliver*

15.4.1926, Uraufführung, Staatliches Schauspielhaus,  
 Dresden.

H. Ih. N.d., n.s., GKC. [393]  
 Ihering, H. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 16/17.4.1926. *Von  
 Reinhardt bis Brecht*, II, 212–16. [394]  
 Reichelt, Johannes. *Das literarische Echo*, 28 (1925–26),  
 542. [395]  
 Vesper, Will. *Die schöne Literatur*, 27 (1926), 285. [396]  
 Wollf, Julius Ferdinand. *Dresdener Neueste Nachrichten*,



n.d., GKC, incomplete.  
 Zwehl, Hans v. N.d., n.s., GKC. [397]

15.4.1926, Uraufführung, Bochum-Duisburg.

Bd. N.d., n.s., GKC. [398]  
 M. V. N.d., n.s., GKC. [399]  
 Sp. *Magdeburger Zeitung*, 22.4.1926. [400]

[15.4.1926, Uraufführung], Barmen-Elberfeld.

H. C. N.d., n.s., GKC. [404]

[15.4.1926], Uraufführung, Thalia-Theater [Hamburg].

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [405]

15.4.1926, Uraufführung, Stadttheater, Krefeld.

Chr. J. N.d., n.s., GKC. [401]  
 Dr. K. L. *Generalanzeiger Dortmund*, 18.4.1926. [403]  
 Sp. *Magdeburger Zeitung*, 22.4.1926. [402]

15.4.1926, Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.

a. *Runscheider General-Anzeiger*, 22.4.1926.  
 anon. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 19.4.1926.  
 anon. *Düsseldorfer Zeitung*, 17.4.1926 and *Der Mittag*,  
 16.4.1926.  
 anon. *Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung* (Erfurt), 21.4.1926.  
 anon. *Kasseler Neueste Nachrichten*, 28.4.1926. [410]  
 Bg. 17/18.4.1926, n.s., D-L-A. [413]  
 Brandt, Hans. *Aufwärts* (Düsseldorf), 30.4.1926 and 2.5.1926.  
 [406]  
 Felner, Karl von. *Krefelder Zeitung*, 1.5.1926.  
 H. *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt*, 17.4.1926. [408]  
 Dr. Hendel. 12.4.1926, n.s., D-L-A. [409]  
 Hüpgens, Th. N.d., n.s., D-L-A. [414]  
 Kr. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 16.4.1926.  
 Dr. K. L. *Generalanzeiger Dortmund*, 18.4.1926.  
 Dr. K. L. *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung*, 22.4.1926.  
 M. *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, 16.4.1926. [412]  
 Dr. H. S. *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18.4.1926.  
 S. *Westdeutsche Landeszeitung* (M. Gladbach), 17.4.1926,





incomplete.

S. *Buersche Volkszeitung*, 21.4.1926.

Sch. *Volkszeitung* (Düsseldorf), 5.5.1926. [407]

Sp. *Magdeburger Zeitung*, 22.4.1926.

Sp. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 20.4.1926.

H. St. *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 16.4.1926.

-ü-. *Stadtanzeiger der Kölnischen Zeitung*, 16.4.1926. [411]

A. W. *Der Führer*, 17.4.1926.

A. Z. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 19.4.1926.

15.4.1926, Uraufführungen, Karlsruhe, Mannheim and Oldenburg.

No reviews available.

5.9.1926, Theater in der Königgrätzer Strasse, Berlin.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [418]

v. Eschwege. N.d., n.s., GKC. [417]

E. F. N.d., n.s., GKC. [415]

Faktor, Emil. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 7.9.1926, GKC.

Abbreviated version in Rühle, 709-10. [416]

Polgar, Alfred. N.d., n.s., GKC. [419]

[1926], Cologne. Dir.: Hermann Albert Schroeder.

-ü-. *Kölner Stadtanzeiger*, 17.5.1926.

[April 1928], Residenz-Theater, [Munich].

Dr. B. *Völkischer Beobachter*, Jg. 41, 22/23.4.1928. [420]

*Papiermühle*

26.1.1927, Uraufführung, Alberttheater, Dresden.

Distler, Otto. N.d., n.s., GKC. [425]

Kaergel, Hans Christ. *Die schöne Literatur*, 28 (1927), 142.  
[423]

Polgar, Alfred. *Die Weltbühne*, 23 (15.2.1927), 267-68. [424]

J. R. N.d., n.s., GKC. [422]

Reichelt, Johannes. *Das literarische Echo*, 29 (1926-27),  
354. [421]



26.1.1927, Uraufführung, Stadttheater, Aachen.

No reviews available.

[26.1.1927], Uraufführung, Krefeld.

K. H. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [426]

[26.1.1927], Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Leipzig.

anon. *Magdeburger Zeitung*, No. 48, 26 Jan. [430]

anon. *B. Z. am Mittag*, No. 26, 27 Jan. [431]

Balthasar, Fritz. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, n.d., GKC.

Bb. *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 29.1.1927. [429]

dl. *Dresdner Anzeiger*, No. 66, n.d., GKC.

hgr. *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, No. 23, n.d., GKC. [432]

h. n. *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, No. 26, n.d., GKC.

Mack, Fritz. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, No. 28, n.d.,  
GKC. [427]

Natonek, Hans. *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, No. 27, n.d., GKC.  
[433]

pl. N.d., n.s., GKC. [428]

Wiegand, Heinrich. *Sächsischer Lokalanzeiger* (Zwickau),  
31.1.1927.

28.5.1927, Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.

Mai, Viktor M. *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, 30.5.1927. [435]

Nörrenberg, C. N.d., n.s., GKC. [434]

H. Sch. N.d., n.s., GKC. [436]

[May 1927], Kammerspiele, Berlin.

Eloesser, Arthur. *Die Weltbühne*, 23 (1927), No. 23, 910–11.  
[438]

Ihering, H. 30.5.1927. *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*. Ed.  
Badenhausen, pp. 252–53. [437]

[1927], Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Munich.

J. St-g. *Völkischer Beobachter*, Jg. 40, 13.8.1927. [439]



[1927], Deutsches Volkstheater, Vienna.

Polgar, A. *Die Weltbühne*, 23 (1927), No. 40, 531–32.

### *Der Präsident*

28.1.1928, Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt/M.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Deubel, Werner. *Die schöne Literatur*, 29 (1928), 153. [440]

Diebold, B. *Das literarische Echo*, 30 (1927–28), 348. [441]

Komödienhaus, [Berlin?].

Faktor, Emil. N.d., n.s., GKC. [442]

### *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*

18.2.1928, Uraufführung, Neues Theater, Leipzig.

No reviews available.

### *Oktobertag*

13.3.1928, Uraufführung, Kammerspiele, Hamburg.

Eloesser, Arthur. *Die Weltbühne*, 24 (1928), No. 12, 460–62.  
[444]

Frankenfeld, A. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 16.3.1928. In Rühle, p.  
869. [445]

Liepmann, Heinz. *Die schöne Literatur*, 29 (1928), 268–69.  
[443]

Otte, P. A. N.d., n.s., GKC. [448]

Pander. N.d., n.s., GKC. [447]

Schabbel, Otto. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 16.3.1928. In Rühle, p.  
868. [446]

16.8.1928, Erstaufführung, Staatliches Schauspielhaus,  
Dresden.





-dt. N.d., n.s., GKC. [453]  
 Francke, Leo. N.d., n.s., GKC. [449]  
 Reichardt, Felix (Prof.). N.d., n.s., GKC. [450]  
 Russo, Wilhelm. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [451]  
 K. S. N.d., n.s., GKC. [452]

30.8.1928, Erstaufführung, Kammerspiele, Berlin.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [458]  
 Eloesser, Arthur. *Vossische Zeitung*, 31.8.1928. In Rühle,  
 869-71. [459]  
 Faktor, Emil. N.d., n.s., GKC. [460]  
 L. H. *Berliner Tageblatt* (Morgen-Ausgabe), 1.9.1928. [456]  
 Hirsch, Leo. *Berliner Tageblatt* (Abend-Ausgabe), 1.9.1928.  
 [457]  
 E. K. N.d., n.s., GKC. [454]  
 Krafft, Erich. N.d., n.s., GKC. [455]

[Sept. 1928], Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, [Munich].

W. *Völkischer Beobachter*, Jg. 41, 26.9.1928. [461]

25.9.1928, Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.

No reviews available.

13.10.1928, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M.

Diebold, B. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 14.10.1928. In Rühle, pp.  
 871-73. [462]

[Nov. 1928], Gastspiel of the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus,  
 Stadthalle, Gelsenkirchen.

W. B. *Gelsenkirchener Allgemeine Zeitung*, n.d., D-L-A.  
 Drap. *General-Anzeiger für Gelsenkirchen-Buer*, n.d., D-L-A.  
 bs. *Gelsenkirchener Zeitung*, 22.11.1928.  
 z-r. *Volkswille* (Gelsenkirchen), n.d., D-L-A.

[1928], Stadttheater, Flensburg. Dir.: Egon Lindenau.

-o-. N.d., n.s., GKC.



Erstaufführung, Prague. Dir.: Max Liebel.

H. H. N.d., n.s., GKC.

### *Die Lederköpfe*

24.11.1928, Uraufführung, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [467]

Deubel, Werner. *Die schöne Literatur*, 30 (1929), 41–42.  
[463]

Diebold, B. *Das literarische Echo*, 31 (1928–29), 287–88.  
[465]

Gehrke, M. M. *Die Weltbühne*, 24 (1928), No. 50, 898–99.  
[464]

Marcuse, Ludwig. N.d., n.s., GKC. [466]

[Feb. 1929], Erstaufführung, Krefeld.

Schlieper, Walter. N.d., n.s., GKC. [468]

### *Zwei Krawatten*

5.9.1929, Uraufführung, Berliner Theater, Berlin.

anon. (1). N.d., n.s., GKC. [471]

anon. (2). N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete.

Bie, Oscar (1). N.d., n.s., GKC. [474]

Bie (2). N.d., n.s., GKC, partly illegible. [475]

Heilborn, Ernst. *Das literarische Echo*, 32 (1929–30), 44.  
[469]

Hollaender, Felix. *Lebendiges Theater*. Berlin: Fischer,  
1932, pp. 241–44. [473]

Ihering, H. 6.9.1929. *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*, II, 424–27.  
[470]

Knudsen, Hans. *Die schöne Literatur*, 30 (1929), 553.

Strecker, Karl. N.d., n.s., GKC. [472]

[Feb. 1930], Erstaufführung, Kammerspiele, Munich.

anon. *Völkischer Beobachter*, Jg. 43, 7.2.1930. [476]





Dec. 1929, Erstaufführung, Schauspielhaus, Leipzig.

anon. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, n.d., GKC.

anon. *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Leipzig), No. 301, n.d., GKC. [480]

P. D. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, No. 3, n.d., GKC.

Delpy, Egbert (Dr.). *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, No. 361, n.d., GKC. [481]

Füldner, Herbert (Dr.). *Leipziger Arbeiter-Politik*, 27.12.1929. [483]

Löbmann, Hugo (Dr.). *Sächsisches Volksblatt* (Leipzig), 3.1.1930.

Natonek, Hans. *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, No. 361, n.d., GKC. [478]

hgr. *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 27.12.1929. [482]

E. W. S. *Leipziger Hausfrau*, 1.1.1930. [477]

-tt-. *Arbeiterpolitik* (Leipzig), 3.1.1930, partly illegible. [479]

[Dec. 1932], Augsburg.

anon. *Völkischer Beobachter*, Jg. 45, 18/19.12.1932. [484]

Thalia-Theater. Dir.: Eugen Schulz-Breidow.

E. A. G. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Filmed version, Universum, Berlin.

H. P. N.d., n.s., GKC.

*Hellseherei*

19.10.1929, Uraufführung, Landestheater, Stuttgart.

anon. *Darmstädter Tageblatt*, 26.10.1929. [486]

Burkert, Helmut. *Die schöne Literatur*, 30 (1929), 616. [485]

B. H. 20 Oct., n.s., GKC. [487]

[19.10.1929], Uraufführung, Kammerspiele, Stadttheater, Lübeck.



anon. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [489]  
 S. N.d., n.s., GKC. [488]

19.10.1929, Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.

anon. *Rhein- u. Ruhrzeitung* (Duisburg), 22.10.1929,  
 incomplete.  
 anon. *Benrather Zeitung*, 21.10.1929, incomplete.  
 anon. *Hannoversches Tageblatt*, 23.10.1929.  
 anon. *Neue Mannheimer Zeitung*, 22.10.1929.  
 R. B. *Freiheit*, 21.10.1929. [492]  
 E. G. *General-Anzeiger* (Oberhausen), 29.10.1929. [500]  
 H. K. *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt*, 22.10.1929. [494]  
 H. W. K. *Düsseldorfer Lokalzeitung*, 26.10.1929.  
 K. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 20.10.1929.  
 Keim, H. W. *Das literarische Echo*, 32 (1929-30), 160.  
 Krüger, A. (Dr.). *Kölner Tageblatt*, 22.10.1929. [491]  
 Krüger, A. (Dr.). *Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung* (Erfurt),  
 25.10.1929.  
 Dr. W. Ks. *Münsterischer Anzeiger*, 23.10.1929 and  
*Niederrheinische Volkszeitung* (Krefeld), 23.10.1929.  
 Lange, Ed. M. (Dr.). *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 24.10.1929.  
 M. N.d., n.s., GKC.  
 my. *Hamburger Achtuhr Abendblatt*, 21.10.1929.  
 -ns. *Der Volksfreund* (Aachen), 21.10.1929.  
 Ny. *Dürener Volkszeitung*, 22.10.1929.  
 rh. *Rheinische Tageszeitung* (Elberfeld), 22.10.1929 and  
*Westfälische Landeszeitung* (Münster), 22.10.1929.  
 S. *Darmstädter Tageblatt*, 26.10.1929 and *Münchener Zeitung*,  
 22.10.1929.  
 PS. 14.11.1929, n.s., D-L-A.  
 Schlieper, Walter. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 22.10.1929.  
 [496]  
 Schmid, Franz. *Westdeutsche Landeszeitung* (Mönchengladbach),  
 22.10.1929. [497]  
 Schreiner, Gerth. *Volkszeitung* (Düsseldorf), 21.10.1929.  
 [495]  
 -sk-. *Weser-Zeitung* (Bremen), 30.10.1929 and *Westfälische*  
*Neueste Nachrichten* (Bielefeld), 23.10.1929.  
 Sp. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 24.10.1929, *Regensburger*  
*Zeitung*, 22.10.1929 and *Magdeburgische Zeitung*,  
 26.10.1929. [490]  
 Dr. St. *Der Mittag*, 21.10.1929. [493]  
 H. St. *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 21.10.1929.  
 -ü-. *Stadtanzeiger* (Cologne), 23.10.1929.  
 Witthaus, Wernher. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 22.10.1929. [498]  
 xix. *Düsseldorfer Stadtanzeiger*, 21.10.1929, incomplete.  
 [499]

Renaissancetheater, Berlin. Dir.: Forster-Larrinaga.



Strecker, Karl. N.d., n.s., GKC.

## Mississippi

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Prinzregenten-Theater, Munich.

Fr. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 24.9.1930.

E. I. *Kasseler Tageblatt*, 23.9.1930.

Mayerhofer, Alfred. *Die schöne Literatur*, 31 (1930), 568.  
[502]

W. R. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 21.9.1930.

Richter, Werner. N.d., n.s., GKC. [503]

Saekel, Herbert. 22 Sept., n.s., GKC. [504]

J. St-g. *Völkischer Beobachter*, Jg. 43, 23.9.1930. [501]

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt/M.

Deubel, Werner. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24.9.1930. [507]

E. F. N.d., n.s., GKC. [506]

Geck, R. *Das literarische Echo*, 33 (1930-31), 95-96. [505]

B. S. *Kasseler Tageblatt*, 23.9.1930.

S. W. *Der Mittag* (Düsseldorf), 22.9.1930.

W. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 24.9.1930.

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Stadttheater, Mainz.

ch. *Der Mittag* (Düsseldorf), 22.9.1930. [508]

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Nationaltheater, Mannheim.

F. D. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Droop, Fritz. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24.9.1930. [509]

H. R. *Kasseler Tageblatt*, 23.9.1930.

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Hessisches Landestheater,  
Darmstadt.

Michel, W. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24.9.1930. [510]

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Staatstheater, Kassel.





Scheller, Will. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24.9.1930. [511]

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Wilhelmstheater, Magdeburg.

R. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 24.9.1930. [512]

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Landestheater, Karlsruhe.

Pl. *Kasseler Tageblatt*, 23.9.1930. [513]

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Stadttheater, Würzburg.

gek. *Kasseler Tageblatt*, 23.9.1930. [514]

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Hamburg.

A. F. N.d., n.s., GKC. [515]

Dr. G. M. *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 24.9.1930.

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Landestheater, Oldenburg.

anon. *Südwestdeutscher Freiheitskämpfer*, 27.9.1930. [518]

Bü. *Oldenburger Landeszeitung*, 27.9.1930. [517]

S. *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 23.9.1930. [519]

Wien, Alfred. *Oldenburger Nachrichten*, 22.9.1930 and  
*Nachrichten für Stadt und Land*, 19.9.1930. [516]

#### Supplementary documentation.

anon. *Hamburger Echo*, 23.9.1930 and *Leipziger Neueste  
 Nachrichten*, 24.9.1930. [521]

anon. *Volksblatt*, 25.9.1930. [525]

anon. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 23.9.1930 and *Neue Badische  
 Landeszeitung* (Mannheim), 25.9.1930. [524]

anon. *Oldenburger Landeszeitung*, 27.9.1930. [526]

anon. *Elbinger Zeitung*, 24.9.1930. [522]

nn. *Nachrichten für Stadt und Land*, 24.9.1930. [520]

rg. *Gothaer Abendblatt*, 22.9.1930. [523]

20.9.1930, Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.



- anon. *Freiheit* (Düsseldorf), 23.9.1930. [527]  
 anon. *Düsseldorfer Lokalzeitung*, 27.9.1930.  
 anon. *Mülheimer Generalanzeiger*, 23.9.1930.  
 anon. *Remscheider Generalanzeiger*, 10.10.1930.  
 anon. *Regensburger Anzeiger*, 23.9.1930.  
 anon. *Westfälische Neueste Nachrichten* (Bielefeld),  
 24.9.1930.  
 anon. *Die Volksbühne* (Berlin), No. 7, Oct. 1930. [529]  
 Eulenberg, Till. *Der Wiener Tag*, 25.9.1930.  
 Felner, Karl von. *Krefelder Zeitung*, 24.9.1930.  
 Dr. Funk. *Duisburger General-Anzeiger*, 22.9.1930.  
 Dr. F. G. *Opladener Zeitung*, 23.9.1930.  
 R. H. *Bergisch-Märkische Zeitung* (Elberfeld), 23.9.1930.  
 hb. *Düsseldorfer Stadtanzeiger*, 22.9.1930.  
 Hoff, Roderich von den. *Dürener Volkszeitung*, 25.9.1930.  
 Dr. K. L. *Königsberger Hartungsche Zeitung*, 23.9.1930. [530]  
 Dr. K. L. *Stuttgarter Neueste Nachrichten*, 22.9.1930.  
 Kissenkoetter, J. A. *Westfälische Neueste Nachrichten*,  
 24.9.1930.  
 Dr. W. Ks. *Münsterischer Anzeiger*, 23.9.1930.  
 Lange, Eduard M. (Dr.). *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 28.9.1930.  
 J. R. M. *Kölner Lokalanzeiger*, 25.9.1930.  
 -ns. *Volksfreund* (Aachen), 22.9.1930. [531]  
 K. R. *Hannoversches Tageblatt*, 28.9.1930.  
 K. R. *Stadtanzeiger* (Cologne), 23.9.1930.  
 WS. *Düsseldorfer Tageblatt*, 22.9.1930.  
 W.S. *Berliner Börsen Kurier*, 23.9.1930.  
 Sch. *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, 22.9.1930.  
 Sch. *Essener Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23.9.1930.  
 anon. *General-Anzeiger* (Barmen-Elberfeld), 22.9.1930.  
 Schmid, F. *Westdeutsche Landeszeitung*, 23.9.1930.  
 Schreiner, Gerth. *Volkszeitung* (Düsseldorf), 22.9.1930.  
 [528]  
 Sp. *Kasseler Tageblatt*, 23.9.1930, *Leipziger Neueste  
 Nachrichten*, 24.9.1930 and *Der Jungdeutsche*  
 (Berlin), 25.9.1930.  
 Dr. St. *Der Mittag* (Düsseldorf), 22.9.1930.  
 Stolz, Heinz. *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (Essen),  
 23.9.1930.  
 C. W. *Deutscher Theaterdienst* (Berlin), 25.9.1930.  
 Witthaus, Wernher. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 22.9.1930.  
 A. Z. *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 23.9.1930.  
 Z-r. 17.10.1930, n.s., D-L-A.

[Oct. 1930], Gastspiel by the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus,  
 Stadthalle, Gelsenkirchen.

- anon. *Gelsenkirchener Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17.10.1930.  
 Bs. *Gelsenkirchener Zeitung*, 17.10.1930.  
 P. K. *Generalanzeiger* (Gelsenkirchen), n.d.  
 Dr. N. *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (Essen), 30.10.1930.





[Nov. 1930], Gastspiel by the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus,  
Stadttheater, Hamborn.

anon. *Rhein- und Ruhrzeitung* (Duisburg), 13.11.1930.

[Nov. 1930], Erstaufführung, Volksbühne, Berlin.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [537]

Engel, Fritz. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 15.11.1930. [534]

Faktor, Emil. *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 15.11.1930. [533]

Falk, Norbert. *B. Z. am Mittag*, 15.11.1930. [532]

Hollaender, Felix. *Lebendiges Theater*, pp. 301-04. [535]

Hollaender, F. *8 Uhr Abendblatt*, 15.11.1930, incomplete.  
[536]

-St.- N.d., n.s., GKC. [538]

6.11.1930, Erstaufführung, Lübeck. Dir.: Reinhold Singe.

Endres, Fritz. N.d., n.s., GKC.

Dr. S-r. 7.11.1930, n.s., GKC.

[Jan. 1931], Erstaufführung, Bochum. Dir.: Dr. Hans Buxbaum.

Dr. Schimming. *Westdeutsche Woche* (Bochum), 18.1.1931.

### *König Hahnrei*

5.5.1931, Uraufführung, Staatliches Schauspielhaus, Berlin.

anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [545]

Fechter, Paul. N.d., n.s., GKC, incomplete. [542]

Ihering, H. 6.5.1931. *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*. III. Berlin:  
Aufbau, 1961, 158-60. [539]

Kn. N.d., n.s., GKC. [544]

og. N.d., n.s., GKC. [543]

Pinthus, Kurt. *8 Uhr Abendblatt*, 6.5.1931. [540]

P. W. B. Z. *am Mittag*, No. 104, n.d., GKC. [541]

### *Der Silbersee*

18.2.1933, Uraufführung, Altes Theater, Leipzig.



anon. *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 21.2.1933. [549]  
 H. Ih. N.d., n.s., GKC. [546]  
 Ihering, H. N.d., n.s., GKC. [547]  
 ög. *Theater-Tageblatt* (Berlin), 21.2.1933, incomplete. [550]  
 Witkowski, Georg. *Das literarische Echo*, 35 (1932-33),  
 398-99. [548]

18.2.1933, Uraufführung, Stadttheater, Erfurt.

h. N.d., n.s., GKC. [551]

18.2.1933, Uraufführung, Stadttheater, Magdeburg.

R. (1). N.d., n.s., GKC. [552]  
 R. (2). *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 20.2.1933. [553]  
 Schab, Günter (Dr.). *Magdeburger Generalanzeiger*, 21.2.1933.  
 [554]

#### Supplementary documentation.

anon. *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 22.2.1933. [555]  
 anon. *Magdeburger Generalanzeiger*, 22.2.1933. [556]  
 anon. *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 22.2.1933. [557]  
 anon. *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 25.2.1933. [558]  
 anon. N.d., n.s., GKC. [559]  
 anon. "Auszug aus dem Verwaltungsbericht der Städtischen  
 Bühnen Magdeburg – Spielzeit 1932-33", n.d., GKC.  
 [560]  
 Bornhagen, Adalbert. N.d. [post-1945], n.s., GKC. [561]

#### *Adrienne Ambrossat*

5.2.1935, Uraufführung, Theater in der Josefstadt, Vienna.

Kraus, René. *Neues Wiener Journal*, 6.2.1935. [562]  
 Scheyer, Moriz. *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 7.2.1935. [563]

#### *Das Los des Ossian Balvesen*

26.11.1936, Uraufführung, Burgtheater, Vienna.

Decsey, Ernst. *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 27.11.1936. [566]



Lothar, Rudolf. *Neues Wiener Journal*, 27.11.1936. [564]  
 Salten, Felix. *Neue Freie Presse*, 27.11.1936. [565]

### *Der Soldat Tanaka*

2.11.1940, Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Zürich.

anon. *Allgemeiner Anzeiger vom Zürichsee*, 5.11.1940. [568]  
 anon. *Blätter der Emigration* (Johannesburg), Jan. 1941.  
 [572]

B. *Zürichsee*, 5.11.[1940].

E. Br. *Der Bund* (Bern), No. 526, n.d.

Diebold, Bernhard. *Die Tat*, 5/6.11.1940. [567]

E. *Die Weltwoche*, No. 365, 8.11.[1940].

Kissel. *Tages-Anzeiger für Stadt und Kanton Zürich*,  
 5.11.1940. [571]

c.l. *Der öffentliche Dienst* (Zürich), 8.11.1941.

-nn. *Neue Zürcher Nachrichten*, 5.11.1940. [569]

R. P. *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Basle), 2.12.1940.

St. *Sie und Er*, No. 46, n.d.

-tt. *Volksrecht* (Zürich), 9.11.1940. [570]

[Nov. 1940], Gastspiel of the Zürich Schauspielhaus,  
 Stadttheater, Schaffhausen.

anon. *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Schaffhausen), 30.11.1940.  
 k. *Schaffhauser Nachrichten*, 30.11.1940.

[1940], Gastspiel of the Zürich Schauspielhaus,  
 Stadttheater, Winterthur.

A. *Der Landbote* (Winterthur), No. 299, n.d., incomplete.

k. *Neues Winterthurer Tagblatt*, No. 300, n.d.

R. *Arbeiterzeitung* (Winterthur), No. 299, n.d.

### *Die Spieldose*

12.10.1943, Uraufführung, Stadttheater, Basle.

Gg. *Basler Nachrichten*, 13.10.1943. [573]

Kl. *National-Zeitung* (Basle), 14.10.1943. [574]

wf. *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Basle), 16.10.1943. [575]





## *Zweimal Amphitryon*

29.4.1944, Uraufführung, Schauspielhaus, Zürich.

anon. *Basler Nachrichten*, 3.5.[1944].  
 anon. *Der öffentliche Dienst* (Zürich), 12.5.1944.  
 B. *Zürichsee-Zeitung* (Stäfa), 2.5.1944. [577]  
 Bg. *Volksrecht*, 6.5.[1944]. [578]  
 E. Br. *Der Bund*, 2.5.[1944].  
 Diebold, Bernhard. *Die Tat*, 2.5.[1944]. [576]  
 B. K. *Tages-Anzeiger*, 1.5.[1944], incomplete.  
 H. L. *Der Landbote*, 19.5.[1944].  
 -nn. *Neue Zürcher Nachrichten*, 3.5.[1944]. [580]  
 H. W. *St. Galler Tagblatt*, 10.5.1944. [581]  
 wti. *N. Z. Z.*, 1.5.[1944]. [579]

## *Das Floss der Medusa*

24.2.1945, Uraufführung, Stadttheater, Basle.

Kahler, K. G. and Hans Ehinger. *Basler Jahrbuch 1946*, p.  
 271. [585]  
 Gg. *Basler Nachrichten*, 26.2.1945. [583]  
 kw. *National-Zeitung* (Basle), 27.2.1945. [582]  
 wf. *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Basle), 28.2.1945, incomplete. [584]



## B. Select Bibliography

### Primary

Kaiser, Georg. *Werke*. Ed. W. Huder. 6 vols. Berlin: Propyläen, 1970-72.

Kaiser, Georg. *Briefe*. Ed. Gesa Valk. Berlin: Propyläen, 1980.

### Secondary

Angermayer, F. A. "Die Auswirkung deutscher Dramatik im Ausland." *Das literarische Echo*, 26 (1923-24), 132.

Arnold, Armin (ed.). *Interpretationen zu Georg Kaiser*. Stuttgart: Klett, 1980.

Davies, Cecil W. *Theatre for the people. The story of the Volksbühne*. Austin: University of Texas, 1977.

*Der Spielplan des Düsseldorfer Schauspielhauses Dumont-Lindemann 1905-32*. Düsseldorf: Triltsch, 1963.

Durieux, Tilla. *Eine Tür steht offen*. Berlin: Herbig, 1954.

Durzak, Manfred. *Das expressionistische Drama*. Vol. I. Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1978.

Franck, Hans. "Der Kampf ums Theater," 1.9.1917. *Das literarische Echo*, 19 (1916-17), 1431-32.





- Frels, W. *Das literarische Echo*, 27 (1924–25), 125.
- Glauert, B. (ed.). *Carl Zuckmayer – Das Bühnenwerk im Spiegel der Kritik*. Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1977.
- Goltschnigg, D. (ed.). *Materialien zur Rezeptions- und Wirkungsgeschichte Georg Büchners*. Kronberg/Ts.: Scriptor, 1974.
- Goltschnigg, D. *Rezeptions- und Wirkungsgeschichte Georg Büchners*. Kronberg/Ts.: Scriptor, 1975.
- Grimm, Gunter (ed.). *Literatur und Leser*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975.
- Grimm, G. *Rezeptionsgeschichte*. Munich: Fink, 1977.
- Hermand, Jost. "Vom Gebrauchswert der Rezension." In *Kritik der Literaturkritik*. Ed. O. Schwencke. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973, pp. 32–47.
- Hill, C. and R. Ley. *The Drama of German Expressionism. A German-English Bibliography*. New York: AMS, 1970.
- Hohendahl, P. U. "Einleitung." *LiLi: Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik*, 4 (1974), No. 15, 7–11.
- Hohendahl, P. U. (ed.). *Sozialgeschichte und Wirkungsästhetik*. Frankfurt/M.: Athenäum, 1974.
- Holub, Robert C. "The American Reception of Reception Theory." *German Quarterly*, 55 (1982), 80–96.
- Iser, W. *Der Akt des Lesens*. Munich: Fink, 1976.
- Iser, W. "Der Lesevorgang." In *Warning*, pp. 253–76.
- Iser, W. *Die Appellstruktur der Texte*. Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1972<sup>3</sup>.



- Iser, W. "Im Lichte der Kritik." In Warning, pp. 325-42.
- Jauss, H. R. "Der Leser als Instanz einer neuen Geschichte der Literatur." *Poetica*, 7 (1975), 325-44.
- Jauss, H. R. "Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft." In *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1970<sup>2</sup>, pp. 144-207.
- Jauss, H. R. "Negativität und Identifikation. Versuch zur Theorie der ästhetischen Erfahrung." In *Positionen der Negativität*. Ed. H. Weinrich. Munich: Fink, 1975, pp. 263-339.
- Jauss, H. R. "Racines und Goethes Iphigenie. Mit einem Nachwort über die Partialität der rezeptionsästhetischen Methode." In Warning, pp. 353-400.
- Jauss, H. R. "Zur Fortsetzung des Dialogs zwischen 'bürgerlicher' und 'materialistischer' Rezeptionsästhetik." In Warning, pp. 343-52.
- Jones, R. A. "German Drama on the American Stage: The Case of Georg Kaiser." *German Quarterly*, 37 (1964), 17-25.
- Kenworthy, B. J. *Georg Kaiser*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1957.
- Kimpel, D. and B. Pinkerneil (eds.). *Methodische Praxis der Literaturwissenschaft*. Kronberg/Ts.: Scriptor, 1975.
- Konecny, Silvia. "Georg Kaisers *König Hahnrei*." *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 97 (1978), 256-70.
- Lewin, L. *Die Jagd nach dem Erlebnis*. Berlin: Verlag die Schmiede, 1926.
- Linke, M. *Gustav Lindemann*. Düsseldorf: Triltsch, 1969.
- Loram, Ian C. "Georg Kaiser's *Der Soldat Tanaka*."



'Vollendeter Woyzeck'?" *German Life and Letters*, 10 (1956), 43-48.

Müller-Seidel, W. (ed.). *Historizität in Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*. Munich: Fink, 1974.

Omankowski, W. *Georg Kaiser und seine besten Bühnenwerke*. Berlin: Schneider, 1922.

Naumann, M. (ed.). *Gesellschaft – Literatur – Lesen*. Berlin: Aufbau, 1975<sup>2</sup>.

Nemec, F. and W. Solms (eds.). *Literaturwissenschaft heute*. Munich: Fink, 1979.

Paulsen, W. *Georg Kaiser. Die Perspektiven seines Werkes*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1960.

Petersen, Klaus. "Das Wort tötet das Leben. Möglichkeiten des Künstlertums in Georg Kaisers Drama *Die Flucht nach Venedig*." *Colloquia Germanica*, 11 (1978), 149-65.

Petersen, Klaus. *Georg Kaiser: Künstlerbild und Künstlerfigur*. Bern: H. Lang, 1976.

Petersen, Klaus. "'Neue Sachlichkeit': Stilbegriff, Epochenbezeichnung oder Gruppenphänomen?" *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift*, 56 (1982), 463-77.

Petzet, W. *Otto Falckenberg: Mein Leben – Mein Theater*. Munich: Zinnen, 1944.

Petzet, W. *Theater – Die Münchner Kammerspiele 1911-72*. Munich: Desch, 1973.

Reese, Walter. *Literarische Rezeption*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980.

Reichert, Herbert W. "Nietzsche and Georg Kaiser." In *Friedrich Nietzsche's Impact on Modern German Literature*. Chapel Hill: University of North





Carolina, 1975, pp. 51-72.

Reinhold, E. and H. A. Pausch (eds.). *Georg Kaiser Symposium*. Berlin: Agora, 1980.

Rietzschel, T. "Kritik ohne Massstab? Gedanken zur bürgerlichen Literaturkritik der zwanziger Jahre." *Weimarer Beiträge*, 27 (1981), No. 7, 103-33.

Samuel, R. and R. H. Thomas. *Expressionism in German Life, Literature and the Theatre (1910-24)*. 1939; rpt. Philadelphia: Saifer, 1971.

Schlawe, Fritz. *Literarische Zeitschriften*. Vol. I. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965<sup>2</sup>.

Schlawe, F. *Literarische Zeitschriften*. Vol. II. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1962.

Schürer, E. *Georg Kaiser*. New York: Twayne, 1971.

Schürer, E. "Verinnerlichung, Protest und Resignation. Georg Kaisers Exil." In *Die deutsche Exilliteratur 1933-1945*. Ed. M. Durzak. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1973, pp. 263-81.

Shaw, Leroy R. "Georg Kaiser auf der deutschsprachigen Bühne 1945-1960." *Maske und Kothurn*, 9 (1963), 68-86.

Sokel, Walter H. (ed.). *Anthology of German Expressionist Drama*. New York: Anchor, 1963.

Sokel, Walter H. *The Writer in Extremis*. Stanford: University, 1959.

Steffens, W. *Kaiser*. Velber: Friedrich, 1969.

Warning, R. (ed.). *Rezeptionsästhetik*. Munich: Fink, 1975.

Wittkowski, W. "Unbehagen eines Praktikers an der Theorie. Zur Rezeptionsästhetik von Hans Robert Jauss."



*Colloquia Germanica*, 12 (1979), 1-27.

Wyss, M. (ed.). *Brecht in der Kritik*. Munich: Kindler, 1977.





## C. Collections of Reviews

Hollaender, Felix. *Lebendiges Theater*. Berlin: Fischer, 1932.

Ihering, Herbert. *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*. Ed. R. Badenhausen. Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1967.

Ihering, H. *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*. Vol. II. Berlin: Aufbau, 1959.

Ihering, H. *Von Reinhardt bis Brecht*. Vol. III. Berlin: Aufbau, 1961.

Kerr, Alfred. *Die Welt im Drama*. Ed. G. F. Hering. Berlin: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1964<sup>2</sup>.

Kerr, A. *Theaterkritiken*. Ed. J. Behrens. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1971.

Polgar, Alfred. *Ja und Nein*. Vol. II. Berlin: Rowohlt, 1926.

Rühle, G. *Theater für die Republik 1917-33*. Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1967.

Schürer, E. *Erläuterungen und Dokumente. Georg Kaiser: Von morgens bis mitternachts*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975.



### III. APPENDIX

#### A. Kaiser Uraufführungen 1915-45

- 11.2.1915, *Der Fall des Schülers Vehgesack*, Neue Bühne, Vienna, dir.: Emil Geyer.
- 20.11.1915, *Grossbürger Möller* (earlier version of *David und Goliath*), Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf.
- 29.1.1917, *Die Bürger von Calais*, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M., dir.: Arthur Hellmer.
- 6.3.1917, *Die Sorina*, Lessing-Theater, Berlin, dir.: Viktor Barnowsky.
- 28.4.1917, *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, Kammerspiele, Munich, dir.: Otto Falckenberg.
- 31.5.1917, *Die Versuchung* (originally called *Die Muttergottes*), Thalia-Theater, Hamburg.
- 23.10.1917, *Der Zentaur* (later called *Konstantin Strobel*; also appeared later, in a revised version, as *Margarine*), Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt/M., dir.: Gustav Hartung.
- 27.10.1917, *Die Koralle*, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M., dir.: Arthur Hellmer and Kammerspiele, Munich, dir.: Otto Falckenberg.
- 26.1.1918, *Rektor Kleist*, Neues Schauspielhaus, Königsberg, dir.: Julius Bab.
- 23.3.1918, *Das Frauenopfer*, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf, dir.: Gustav Lindemann.
- 21.10.1918, *Claudius*, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. and Städtische Schauspiele, Baden-Baden.
- 21.10.1918, *Friedrich und Anna*, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. and Städtische Schauspiele, Baden-Baden.
- 21.10.1918, *Juana*, (Schauspiel), Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M. and Städtische Schauspiele, Baden-Baden.
- 16.11.1918, *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, Kammerspiele, Hamburg, dir.: Erich Ziegel and Stadttheater (Intimes Haus), Nuremberg, dir.: Dr. Liebscher.
- 26.11.1918, *Der Brand im Opernhaus* (revised version), Kleines Schauspielhaus, Charlottenburg, Berlin, dir.: Georg Kaiser.
- 28.11.1918, *Gas I*, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M., dir.: Arthur Hellmer and Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf, dir.: Gustav Lindemann.
- 5.12.1919, *Hölle Weg Erde*, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M., dir.: Arthur Hellmer.



- 29.1.1920, *Der gerettete Alkibiades*, Residenz-Theater, Munich, dir.: Otto Liebscher.
- 29.10.1920, *Gas II*, Vereinigte deutsche Theater, Brünn, dir.: Dr. Beer.
- 5.11.1920, *Europa*, Grosses Schauspielhaus, Berlin, dir.: Karlheinz Martin.
- 31.1.1921, *Die jüdische Witwe*, Landestheater, Meiningen, dir.: Dr. Ulbrich.
- 14.2.1922, *Kanzlist Krehler*, Kammerspiele des Deutschen Theaters, Berlin, dir.: Heinrich Herald.
- 16.3.1922, *Der Protagonist* (Schauspiel), Lobe-Theater, Breslau.
- 19.3.1922, *David und Goliath* (revised version of *Grossbürger Möller*), [Uraufführung?], Stadttheater, Minden/Westf., dir.: Dr. Wolfgang Hoffmann-Harnisch.
- 9.2.1923, *Die Flucht nach Venedig*, Stadttheater (Intimes Theater), Nuremberg, dir.: Merck.
- 2.6.1923, *Gilles und Jeanne*, Altes Theater, Leipzig, dir.: Dr. Kronacher.
- 3.11.1923, *Nebeneinander*, Lustspielhaus Die Truppe, Berlin, dir.: Berthold Viertel.
- 27.3.1924, *Kolportage*, Lessing-Theater, Berlin, dir.: Emil Lind and Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M., dir.: Arthur Hellmer.
- 7.1.1925, *Juana* (Oper), Stadttheater (Intimes Theater), Nuremberg.
- 9.4.1925, *Gats*, Deutsches Volkstheater, Vienna.
- 4.9.1925, *Margarine* (revised version of *Der Zentaur*), Komödienhaus, Berlin, dir.: Ralph Arthur Roberts.
- 12.11.1925, *Der mutige Seefahrer*, Staatliches Schauspielhaus, Dresden, dir.: Josef Gielen.
- 25.3.1926, *Der Protagonist* (Oper), Staatsoper, Dresden, dir.: Josef Gielen.
- 15.4.1926, *Zweimal Oliver*, Staatliches Schauspielhaus, Dresden, dir.: Georg Kiesau; Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf, dir.: Gustav Lindemann; Thalia-Theater, Hamburg, dir.: Röbbeling; Barmen-Elberfeld, dir.: Otto Henning; Bochum-Duisburg, dir.: Viktor Ahlers; Stadttheater, Krefeld, dir.: Ernst Martin; Karlsruhe; Mannheim and Oldenburg.





- 26.1.1927, *Papiermühle*, Alberttheater, Dresden, dir.: Paul Smolny; Stadttheater, Aachen; Schauspielhaus, Leipzig, dir.: Fritz Viehweg and Krefeld, dir.: Clemens Wrede.
- 28.1.1928, *Der Präsident* (published earlier as *Der Kongress*), Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt/M., dir.: Buch.
- 18.2.1928, *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*, Neues Theater, Leipzig.
- 13.3.1928, *Oktobertag*, Kammerspiele, Hamburg, dir.: Gustaf Gründgens.
- 24.11.1928, *Die Lederköpfe*, Neues Theater, Frankfurt/M., dir.: Arthur Hellmer.
- 5.9.1929, *Zwei Krawatten*, Berliner Theater, Berlin, dir.: Forster-Larrinaga.
- 19.10.1929, *Hellseherei*, Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf, dir.: Franz Everth; Kammerspiele, Stadttheater, Lübeck, dir.: Dr. Otto Hahn and Landestheater, Stuttgart, dir.: Elwenstoeck.
- 20.9.1930, *Mississippi*, Prinzregenten-Theater, Munich, dir.: Karl Hans Böhm; Hessisches Landestheater, Darmstadt, dir.: Karl Ebert; Schauspielhaus, Bremen; Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf, dir.: Gustav Lindemann; Landestheater, Oldenburg, dir.: Hellmuth Götze; Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Hamburg, dir.: Arnold Marlé; Wilhelmstheater, Magdeburg; Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt/M., dir.: Eugen Felber; Schauspielhaus, Dresden; Landestheater, Karlsruhe, dir.: F. Baumbach; Landestheater, Stuttgart; Staatstheater, Kassel, dir.: Jakob Geis; Stadttheater, Würzburg, dir.: Keller; Stadttheater, Mainz, dir.: Klitsch; Stadttheater, Konstanz and Nationaltheater, Mannheim, dir.: Dr. Gerhard Storz.
- 5.5.1931, *König Hahnrei*, Staatliches Schauspielhaus, Berlin, dir.: Jürgen Fehling.
- 18.2.1933, *Der Silbersee*, Altes Theater, Leipzig, dir.: Detlef Sierck; Stadttheater, Erfurt, dir.: Hermann Pfeiffer and Stadttheater, Magdeburg, dir.: Hellmuth Götze.
- 5.2.1935, *Adrienne Ambrossat*, Theater in der Josefstadt, Vienna, dir.: Otto Preminger.



26.11.1936, *Das Los des Ossian Balvesen*, Burgtheater,  
Vienna, dir.: Röbbling.

2.11.1940, *Der Soldat Tanaka*, Schauspielhaus, Zürich, dir.:  
Franz Schnyder.

12.10.1943, *Die Spieldose*, Stadttheater, Basle, dir.: Robert  
Trösch.

29.4.1944, *Zweimal Amphitryon*, Schauspielhaus, Zürich, dir.:  
Leopold Lindtberg.

24.2.1945, *Das Floss der Medusa*, Stadttheater, Basle, dir.:  
Robert Pirk.





## B. Berlin Productions 1915-45

- 6.3.1917, *Die Sorina*, Uraufführung, Lessing-Theater, dir.: Viktor Barnowsky.
- 17.1.1918, *Die Koralle*, Erstaufführung, Kammerspiele des Deutschen Theaters, dir.: Felix Hollaender.
- 26.11.1918, *Der Brand im Opernhaus* (revised version), Uraufführung, Kleines Schauspielhaus, (Charlottenburg), dir.: Georg Kaiser.
- 31.1.1919, *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, Erstaufführung, Deutsches Theater, dir.: Felix Hollaender.
- 25.2.1919, *Gas I*, Volksbühne, dir.: Dr. Paul Legband.
- 27.9.1919, *Die Bürger von Calais*, Volksbühne, dir.: Paul Legband.
- 20.1.1920, *Hölle Weg Erde*, Erstaufführung, Lessing-Theater, dir.: Viktor Barnowsky.
- 5.11.1920, *Europa*, Uraufführung, Grosses Schauspielhaus, dir.: Karlheinz Martin.
- 14.4.1921, *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, Lessing-Theater, dir.: Viktor Barnowsky.
- 14.2.1922, *Kanzlist Krehler*, Uraufführung, Kammerspiele des Deutschen Theaters, dir.: Heinrich Herald.
- 27.3.1923, *Die Flucht nach Venedig*, Erstaufführung, Kammerspiele des Deutschen Theaters, dir.: Bernhard Reich.
- 3.11.1923, *Nebeneinander*, Uraufführung, Lustspielhaus Die Truppe, dir.: Berthold Viertel.
- 27.3.1924, *Kolportage*, Uraufführung, Lessing-Theater, dir.: Emil Lind.
- Aug. 1924, *Gilles und Jeanne*, Dramatisches Theater, dir.: Karl Vogt.
- 1.11.1924, *David und Goliath* (revised version of *Grossbürger Möller*), Wallner-Theater, dir.: Emil Lind.
- 4.9.1925, *Margarine* (revised version of *Der Zentaur*), Uraufführung, Komödienhaus, dir.: Ralph Arthur



Roberts.

- 7.11.1925, *Die jüdische Witwe*, Theater am Schiffbauerdamm,  
dir.: Karlheinz Martin.
- [1925], *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, Schillertheater, dir.:  
Albrecht Joseph.
- [1925], *Der Brand im Opernhaus*, Staatliches Schauspielhaus,  
dir.: Friedrich Neubauer.
- [1925], *Kolportage*, Wallner-Theater, dir.: Emil Lind.
- 5.9.1926, *Zweimal Oliver*, Theater in der Königgrätzer  
Strasse, dir.: Viktor Barnowsky.
- [May 1927], *Papiermühle*, Kammerspiele, dir.: Berthold  
Viertel.
- [1927], *Der mutige Seefahrer*, Thaliatheater, dir.: Josef  
Gielen.
- 30.8.1928, *Oktobertag*, Erstaufführung, Kammerspiele, dir.:  
Robert Forster-Larrinaga.
- 7.9.1928, *Gas I*, Schillertheater, dir.: Leopold Jessner.
- 5.9.1929, *Zwei Krawatten*, Uraufführung, Berliner Theater,  
dir.: Forster-Larrinaga.
- Sept. 1929, *Kolportage*, Komödie, dir.: Erich Engel.
- [Dec. 1929], *Das Frauenopfer*, Erstaufführung, Tribüne, dir.:  
Eugen Robert.
- [Nov. 1930], *Mississippi*, Erstaufführung, Volksbühne, dir.:  
Hans Hinrich.
- 5.5.1931, *König Hahnrei*, Uraufführung, Staatliches  
Schauspielhaus, dir.: Jürgen Fehling.
- Sept. 1931, *Nebeneinander*, Volksbühne, dir.: Karlheinz  
Martin.







**B30397**